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ALDOUS HUXLEY ON DRUGS, MYSTICISM AND THE HUMANIZATION OF MAN

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled Aldous Huxley on Drugs, Mysticism and the Humanization of Man submitted by Lawrence Davidson in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of History.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis covers the intellectual and spiritual development of Aldous Huxley as influenced by the political and scientific events of the 20th century.

Specifically, it seeks to show how the two world wars and the "crisis of values" that followed each of them, as well as the advancement of technological and psychological knowledge, led Huxley to postulate practicable means for individual human betterment. In this process he produced a corpus that constitutes a thorough and penetrating critique of modern Western society.

Central to the development of Huxley's pragmatic means to what, ultimately, is presented as man's transcendent end is the synthesis of psychedelic agents which produce significant alterations in perception. The thesis attempts to show why and how Huxley held these agents to have great potential in the humanization of man and to evaluate their worth.

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INTRODUCTION

Aldous Huxley was a systematic seeker of awareness and understanding of both himself and his world. His object was the overcoming of alienation and the development of a practicable prescription for human betterment. It is the aim of this paper to demonstrate how Huxley gradually came to develop his ends and means, how he tested these and how he finally arrived at a worldview that he felt made sense of reality, would set forth a direction for human progress, and thus vastly broaden individual potential.

Huxley came to believe that there existed a basic human drive for self-transcendence. By this he meant a universal desire to go beyond the limits of "normal" everyday perceptions and experiences. This is a broad proposition and, the way Huxley used it, encompassed everything from the search for mystical union with the divine to the more mundane quest for constant distraction in modern life. Huxley is aware that the attempt to fulfill this desire could lead to good or bad consequences and thus his main social aim became the discovery of effective and safe means of positively channelling it in the direction of heightened self-awareness. Lack of self-awareness in today's world led him to a general critique of society and consequently a concentration on means to what he considered "positive"

self-transcendence, particularly by the use of psychedelic drugs[1] for the ultimate purpose of achieving mystical experience.

Huxley's attitude toward mysticism as well as his interest and use of psychedelics were central to his belief in man's capacity for self-betterment and in no sense a search for an avenue by which to "opt out" of society or run away from the pressures and alienating aspects of the world he lived in. Many commentators deal with Huxley's interest in drugs and mysticism within the context of literary criticism or as biographical data, thus often missing their importance as paramount means in his overall scheme for individual improvement. Still others judge his approval of psychedelics and mysticism as proof that his later years were filled with world-weariness and a longing to escape. This last interpretation will be shown in this thesis to represent a total misreading of Huxley's approach to life.

Huxley's deep interest in all aspects of the human condition and his belief in a general human drive for self-transcendence which can lead to mystical experience plus the demonstrated capacities of psychedelic agents resulted in an effort on his part to produce a prospectus for a future which, he thought, was a manifest improvement on

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[1] As used in this thesis, psychedelics are defined as naturally occurring chemical substances or their synthetic derivatives that produce significant alterations from ordinary consciousness, but do not result in addiction.

present circumstances. He considered this a workable program for the individual wherein the adoption of certain ends and the use of certain means can have predictable positive results on perceptions and overall life-style. It can be judged a non-utopian approach in as much as Huxley's aim is not to persuade the whole world or an entire society to adopt his approach to life but only to formulate a practicable scenario for those individuals who do. No doubt he would have liked as many as possible to see the potential for self-betterment in his ideas and thus take them up for themselves, but he was not so naive as to think that he could reform the world.

The approach taken in this paper is a topical one. The main subjects that interested Huxley are isolated and their contribution to his formulation of ends and means are shown.

This investigation is based on Huxley's published books, articles, speeches and interviews. In addition, these have been supplemented, where possible, with interviews with close associates of Huxley. Unfortunately, anyone working on this writer must face the fact that almost all personal papers, annotations, diaries, manuscripts, etc. were lost when his California residence was destroyed by fire in 1961.

There is one problem that bears mentioning. Huxley writes of mankind in general, or Western man in particular.

At times his statements might seem too general and the desire might arise to see them made more specific. However, this is not an uncommon problem with moral philosophers and, within the text of this paper, an effort will be made to give greater definition to such categories where possible.

CHAPTER I

ALDOUS HUXLEY'S CONCEPT OF MAN

Aldous Huxley was one of the first in Western society to suggest a potential for good (that is, for self-betterment) in the use of psychedelic substances which offer large numbers of people the ability to broaden their perceptions.[1] Perceptions guide action and thus

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[1] In the West, Huxley's most notable predecessors are William James, Jacque Joseph Moreau, Havelock Ellis and Fitzhugh Ludlow. James and Moreau will be mentioned in Chapter IV.

Havelock Ellis, best known for his pioneering work on the psychology of sex, first took peyote (of which he had learned from Weir Mitchell and certain American anthropologists who had studied the use of peyote among the Kiowa Indians) on Good Friday of 1897. The main effect the drug seemed to have on him was to greatly enhance his visual sense, leading him to recommend it to artist friends of his, including W. B. Yeats. See John S. Collis, Havelock Ellis: Artist of Life (N.Y.: William Sloane Assoc., 1959), p. 147. Noting that mescalin has positive value only for those of sound mind and body, Ellis concludes that this drug experience is of "an educational value of no mean influence" for it promotes a poet's sensitivity to the world. See H. Ellis, "Mescal: A New Artificial Paradise," Contemporary Review (1898) p. 141.

Fitzhugh Ludlow, an American teacher and journalist of the mid-nineteenth century, was a frequent user of hashish. Ludlow recounts his drug experiences in a book styled after DeQuincey and entitled, The Hasheesh Eater: Being Passages from the Life of a Pythagorean. Ludlow was a great admirer of the ancient Greek thinker Pythagoras, whose theories he believed he had come to an understanding of while under the influence of hashish. He even advanced the opinion that Pythagoras himself had partaken of the plant drug during his alleged wanderings in Egypt and India. See F. Ludlow, The

the proper use of consciousness-expanding procedures, be they involving psychedelics, non-drug mystical techniques, or educational programs of the broadest nature, can alter man's world. In order to understand why Huxley thought these "aids" to perception could enhance man's human qualities we must first arrive at an understanding of his experiences as a young man and his assessment of the position of Western man both socially and morally. The two: personal

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Hasheesh Eater (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Literature House, 1970), pp. 181-182.

Ludlow goes on to tell of his life experiences as a hashish user. He concludes that the "symbolizing" or perceptual powers of the mind are limitless--all one needs to make fuller use of them is a liberating catalyst or "translator":

> In some apocalyptic states of delirium like that which I have mentioned, and others succeeding it, there were symbols of an earthly nature used, which not only had never before conveyed to me such truth as I then saw, but never had expressed any truth at all. Things the least suspected of having any significance beyond their material agency were perceived to be the most startling illustrations and incarnations of spiritual facts.
>
> Now where, among created things, shall we set the boundaries to this capacity for symbolizing. In view of that which I saw . . . I felt and still feel, forced to the conclusion that there is no boundary.
>
> What a world of symbols, then, lie sleeping in expectancy of the approaching times which shall bring some translator to their now unnoticed sermons, and bid them speak of unconceived beauties and truths!" Ibid., pp. 150-151.

Ludlow's "translator" was hashish and while he realized that the prolonged use of this agent could be detrimental, he does hold out the hope that the judicious use of some more benign mind-expanding drug can correct the imbalance, which he spends many pages decrying, between spiritual awareness and the over-concentration on material ends. Ibid., pp. 269-277.

experiences and the perception of social problems are, in Huxley's case, very much interwoven.

Many of the insights which Huxley had respecting man's capabilities came from his personal struggle to overcome persistent illness. From his youth he suffered from a succession of different physical complaints. Nearly blinded from an eye disease in his teenage years, he was presented with his first challenge to overcome a perceptual handicap. He learned Braille and enlarged the use of his other senses. He took up the controversial Bates method of eye training. Through this method he learned how to use his eyes to their maximum potential.[2] Huxley's early difficulties with his eyes led him to a life-long interest and study of man's capacity to use all his senses to their maximum potential. By senses moreover, he understood not only those of touch, taste, smell, hearing and seeing, but others such as the kinesthetic sense, the sensation of movement and strain in one's muscles and sensations inherent in the autonomic nervous system. All of which, he felt, could be brought under greater conscious control.[2a] Beginning

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[2]Aldous Huxley, The Art of Seeing (N.Y.: Harper, 1942), passim. Also see, Aldous Huxley, Letters of Aldous Huxley, ed. by Grover Smith (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1969), pp. 445, 450, 451, 462, 468-9, 473, 477, 482-3, 426-7, 550, 591, 595, 605-6, 641, 649, 695, 759n, 781, 815, 822, 872-3, 907-8.

[2a]See Aldous Huxley "The Education of an Amphibian" in Adonis and the Alphabet (London: Chatto & Windus, 1956), pp. 19. 26-28.

about November of 1934, when Huxley was 40, and for the next two years he was the victim of insomnia and spells of depression. Again he dealt with the problem as a challenge to be overcome so that he would function not just as well, but better than before. Huxley experimented with a range of different "therapies" including gardening and yoga. Finally, in 1936 he was introduced either by Gerald Heard or G. B. Shaw to the Australian therapist F. M. Alexander. Alexander, considered by many orthodox physicians of the day as a quack, had developed a therapeutic method which he called "Kinesthetic re-education." Huxley describes Alexander's theory:

> There is a correct or "natural" relationship between the neck and the trunk and . . . normal functioning of the total organism cannot take place except when the neck and trunk are in the right relationship. . . . This, as I know by experience, is an exceedingly valuable technique. For not only does one have to become aware of the data of organic reality . . . [it also becomes possible] for the physical organism to function as it ought to function, thus improving the general state of physical and mental health.3

Huxley learned techniques of posture control and mind-body interaction from Alexander. By Huxley's own account these practices did indeed make him physically and mentally healthier, initially by putting an end to his insomnia and

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[3]Letters, op. cit., p. 617, Huxley to Dr. Hubert Benoit, Feb. 3, 1950. Alexander and his method play a role in Huxley's novel Eyeless in Gaza wherein the sage-physician Dr. Miller teaches the protagonist Bemis how to make the best of his mind-body. This same method reappears in many of Huxley's non-fictional essays and finally as part of the overall educational practices of Pala in his last novel, Island.

depression and enhancing his coping capacity over the long run.[4]

It cannot be doubted that it was the heroic way he went about dealing with these specific mental and physical problems that sharpened Huxley's naturally penetrating insight into human nature. As a result these trials had an effect on the young Huxley's literary percpetions in more than one sense. An inherent strength of character and determination to make the best of the most trying situation prevented him and his writing from turning bitter. Rather one easily detects an aloof kind of cynicism. This cynicism was, to some extent, the product of the gap Huxley sensed between his personal values (from which he projected for himself an idea of what man could and should be) and the values reflected in the everyday behavior of the great mass of men. It is also the direct result of the disillusionment wrought by the First World War and the years following.

Huxley was 20 years old when World War One broke out and the social, moral and political breakdown it began also helped shape his perception of and approach to human problems. Out of the war came both domestic and international turmoil for continental Europe leading to the political success of both the Fascist and Communist movements, that is totalitarianism. Propaganda techniques were vastly improved and thus

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[4] Letters, op. cit., pp. 400, 400n, 408, 473, 525-7, 617-8, 695, 818, 867. Also see Sybille Bedford, Aldous Huxley, A Biography (London: Chatto & Windus, 1973), I, pp. 312-3.

reached new heights of effectiveness in the inter-war years, exploiting the passions of large masses of citizens confronted with overwhelming economic distress. The carnage of the war, the frustrated idealism of a discredited "war to end all wars," the years of propagandistic lies feeding surviving hatreds, inevitably produced a postwar disillusionment among many young Western intellectuals; the feeling of being a "lost generation."

Huxley momentarily partook of this disillusionment and shared in the pervasive questioning of the inevitability of progress, of the belief in the essential correctness of the path Western Civilization had been travelling. While never going so far as the Dadaists and never really able to relate to the revolt of the Surrealists, Huxley did feel a kinship to those writers (such as his friend, D. H. Lawrence) and artists who, as expatriates, tended to reject the present civilization with its increasingly "mass" culture.

In his mid-twenties when the war ended, Huxley had to work within the moral void it had bequeathed to the "lost generation." On to this scene he appeared with a series of early novels, Crome Yellow (1921), Antic Hay (1923), and Those Barren Leaves (1925) as well as a number of short stories. In these works clergymen, educators, artists, and scientists are dissected, their approaches and answers to the ethical crisis of the time examined and, ultimately, found wanting. Romantic love is treated as a sham while the

amoralist too is depicted as absurd.

In such a way did Huxley ruthlessly analyse the prevailing attitudes of the day, especially those of the British middle and upper classes, and found them less than humanly fulfilling. Inasmuch as this attitude was shared by many literate Englishmen whose disillusionment and alienation were not very much dissipated by the fast-paced, material prosperity of the 1920's, Huxley became widely read and appreciated in the years between the wars. What most of his readers failed to realize, however, and we know this from the disappointment with which his novel Eyeless in Gaza (1936) was received, was that Huxley's cynicism, unlike their own, rested on a basically positive view of man's potential and his never-ending search for a way to transcend the vacuousness of any particular time. His literary despair in fact coincided with a purposeful search for values.

In his first novel, Crome Yellow (1921) Huxley adopted a style of dialogue designed to show characters representative of different worldviews. It was a style he would use again and again in his fiction. In the role of the rich hostess of Crome is Priscilla Wimbush, a woman doubly addicted to gambling and astrology. Both she and her mentor on matters concerning the world of the occult, Mr. Barbecue-Smith, embody the young Huxley's attitude toward those who use the occult and more esoteric forms of faith in "the other world"

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[5]See Huxley's comment on his approach to writing fiction in a letter to his father dated April 29, 1924. Letters, op. cit., p. 228.

as a kind of instant tonic for dealing with the vicisstudes of life. Huxley always had a reserved fascination for the occult as well as those not quite acculturated elements of the population attracted to it.[5a] Such a figure is Mrs. Wimbush who, rich and bored, uses her interest in the occult to give meaning to an otherwise pointless existence. "You've no idea" she says, "how amusing and exciting life becomes when you believe. All that happens means something."[5b] For Barbecue-Smith, an expert on "pipelines to the infinite," the same sort of faith has, absurdly, turned him into a literary success. His inspiration comes about when he hypnotizes himself by staring fixedly at a bright light and then, while quite unconscious, all his writing comes automatically. In but a few hours he finds that he has turned out whole chapters on "the other world."

It is evident that in the process of searching for meaning in life the young Huxley became sceptical of the popular forms of spiritualism.[6] In his early fiction Huxley portrays all uncritical faith in powers other than those

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[5a]While an interesting psychological connection can be drawn between this fascination and Huxley's willingness to befriend mediums, clairvoyants, and "quack" doctors, emphasis should be placed on the reserved nature of his approach to this world. Always open-minded, he never ceased to exercise a penetrating kind of discrimination.

[5b]Aldous Huxley, Crome Yellow (London: Chatto and Windus, 1921), pp. 13-14.

[6]Also see Huxley's play, The World of Light (London: Chatto and Windus, 1931) and his short story, "The Claxtons" in Collected Short Stories (N.Y.: Harper, 1957).

rooted in man's humanity, as absurd. It will become clear later, however, that Huxley was not opposed to all forms of spiritual exploration.[7] Rather, his early attitude was an expression of uneasiness with those interests which, he believed, distracted men from using their full human capacities to improve the world in which they live.

As noted the problem of the development and full utilization of human capacities is first expressed in Huxley's writing against the backdrop of the alienation felt by the Western intelligentsia of the 1920's. Almost all of his characters are more or less stifled because this sense of alienation pervades their perceptions and interpersonal relations. For instance, Denis, the young poet of Crome Yellow,[8] reflects, as he tries to speak to the nearly deaf Mary, on what a poor medium words are for making vital personal contact.[9] Meanings might approach objectivity in Webster's dictionary, but the way in which words are used by living

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[7]One can say from a very early age Huxley believed in a discoverable spiritual undercurrent to life. In a letter to his brother Julian in December of 1915 he wrote, "I have come to agree with Thomas Aquinas that individuality. . . . is nothing more than a question of matter. We are potentially at least, though habit of matter has separated us, unanimous. One cannot escape mysticism; it positively thrusts itself . . . upon one." Letters, op. cit., p. 88.

[8]At least one critic, Charles M. Holmes, sees Denis as "an obvious projection of Aldous Huxley," Huxley's "younger self." Aldous Huxley and the Way to Reality (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1970), p. 22.

[9]Throughout his entire literary career Huxley will never tire of expounding on the need to get beyond language in our efforts to relate to others and the world. See, for example, "Education on the Nonverbal Level," Daedalus, XCV (Spring, 1962), passim.

people are personal and hard to share. One could talk forever, Denis feels, but still not make contact--like two straight lines extending to infinity.[10]

Again in Crome Yellow, Henry Wimbush expresses his alienation through a longing to limit his contact with people. Henry tells Denis that he much prefers reading and studying about dead people and past occurrences rather than having to put up with human interaction in the here and now. Love and friendship seem to him trying and painful. Only private reading and study he finds safe and pleasurable. During a large country fair he has sponsored for the village people, Wimbush comments that the whole thing would be much more stimulating if one were reading about it three hundred years hence. Why? Because "adventures and romance only take on their adventurous and romantic qualities at second-hand. Live them and they are just a slice of life like the rest."[11]

The same themes of meaninglessness of life and alienation led Huxley to an examination of the problem of the development of full human potential in his second novel, Antic Hay.[12] Early on in the work Huxley discusses the

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[10] Crome Yellow, op. cit., p. 30.

[11] Ibid., pp. 302-3. In his later novel, Point Counter Point (N.Y.: Harper & Bros., 1928), p. 72ff, Huxley portrays a similar attitude adopted by the sophisticated intellectual Phillip Quarles. Quarles has trained himself to relate to the world in such a cerebral way that he finds himself totally incapable of emotional involvement.

[12] That Huxley was trying to grapple with the alienation of his time in Antic Hay can be seen from the following way he

natural and social limitations placed on man's liberties. Mr. Bojanus, an intellectually inclined tailor, offers a lengthy monologue on revolution and liberty. In theory, he says, revolutions are undertaken for the sake of expanding liberty but history shows, in fact, that they never fulfill this goal. Even where some political liberty is delivered, what is the result? Is anyone really any freer? No, he concludes, it is all "a swindle." "Political liverty is a swindle," he remarks, "because a man doesn't spend his time being political. He spends it sleeping, eating, amusing himself a little and working--mostly working." "No amount of profit-sharing or self-government by the workers," he continues, ". . . can get rid of the fundamental slavery--the necessity of working." Then there is another fundamental slavery according to Bojanus, a slavery born of the necessity of having to eat, and sleep.[13]

Through Bojanus Huxley expresses his pessimism respecting a real enlargement of the area of liberty. But he is even more pessimistic. The average individual lacks ability to utilize freedom even if political and economic circumstances happen to supply him with it. Again through Bojanus Huxley

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described the book to his father in a letter of November 26, 1923, "I will only point out that it is a book written by a member of what I may call the war-generation for others of his kind; and that it is intended to reflect . . . the life and opinions of an age which has seen the violent disruption of almost all the standards, conventions and values current in the previous epoch." Letters, op. cit., p. 224.

[13]Aldous Huxley, Antic Hay (London: Chatto & Windus, 1923), pp. 38-9.

concludes that even a man of leisure would not be free in any real sense unless he was exceptional, "a man of sense," "a man of independent judgment." Most men would not know how to use their leisure time in ways other than those imposed upon them via the movies, radio, football matches and other passive forms of entertainment.[14] The ultimate effect of programmed leisure, to Huxley, would be an antrophying of the mind.[15]

Under these circumstances, Huxley felt, freedom only breeds a greater passion for distraction. He examines the consequences of this apparent freedom through the attitudes of Antic Hay's protagonist, Theodore Gumbril, Jr. Gumbril reflects on what he senses to be a growing dilemma: Though man has a basic need for quiet, yet jazz bands, blaring news reports, noisy factories, and all the other distractions of the modern world have become necessary to our life-styles and now preclude any possibility of introspective repose. Despite all the distractions, however, Gumbril feels that the quiet might be there, hidden behind all the contemporary noise. If we take advantage of it, it allows us to make life

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[14] Ibid., pp. 39-40.

[15] For a non-fictional exposition of the early Huxley's ideas on this subject see "Pleasures" in On The Margin (London: chatto & Windus, 1923), pp. 45-52. Huxley will, of course, carry what he sees to be the negative effects of programed leisure to the extreme in Brave New World (London: Chatto & Windus, 1950), passim.

more meaningful.[16] Unfortunately he finds quiet terrifies most people. It frightens man because it forces us back upon ourselves. This is such an alien feeling that it causes most people to think of this quiet as a form of death--the death of all "the regular, habitual, daily part of you."[17]

The need for quiet, which facilitates introspection and helps make life more meaningful becomes a regular theme in Huxley's writings and can be contrasted sharply with the helter-skelter world of the twenties of which he was so critical. Huxley seems to be warning that hedonistic diversions, art for art's sake, and the pursuit of money are inadequate substitutes for true self-awareness. The search for self-awareness and an insight into "reality" through inner quiet leads, in his later works, to a call for the integrating of meditative and Zen techniques of awareness into the educational process[18] and for research into psychedelic drugs

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[16]Huxley expresses the same idea in his short story "The Tillotson Banquet" when he has the character Spode reflect, "What was the use of his own youth and cleverness? He saw himself suddenly as a boy . . . rattling his noisy cleverness, waving his arms in ceaseless and futile activity, never resting in his efforts to scare away . . . all those serene thoughts and faiths and emotions that only visit minds that have humbled themselves to quiet." In Aldous Huxley, Collected Short Stories (London, Chatto & Windus, 1958), p. 131.

[17]Antic Hay, op. cit., pp. 186-188. Huxley liked to point to the United States as the paradigm of the hectic life-style. There, he suggested, the attempt to escape one's inner-self through a constant round of distractions reflected an ultimate dread of death--the one moment when all attempts at distraction must fail. See After Many a Summer (London: Chatto and Windus, 1939), passim.

[18]See "Education on a Nonverbal Level" op. cit., pp. 283-4, 286-7.

to promote greater self-awareness.[19] In the 1920's, however, Huxley was still unsure of which means would transcend alienation, make freedom viable and life worth living.

The first hint that he had found a method which facilitates inner peace comes in his third novel, Those Barren Leaves, where Huxley first seriously discusses mysticism. The chief character, a young playboy named Calamy comes to realize the vacuous nature of his life. Seeking after spiritual meaning, he finds himself faced with the choice, the life of the flesh or the life of the spirit. Gazing meditatively at his hand, Calamy poses the choice in terms of the following problem: He comes to the realization that his hand is occupying a series of dimensions at once. There is the hand that responds to the commands of a morally aware mind and thus is capable of performing acts of either good or evil. There is the hand as a phyicist or chemist might see it, a mass or whirling electrons and nucleii, or in terms of its molecular components. How does one get from atoms to molecules to good and evil, Calamy wonders? His desire to find the answer to this question in terms of his own being is driving him to choose a contemplative life-style. To answer this basic question, he concludes, requires that one mediate long and hard enough hoping that in the end one will be able to

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[19] See Aldous Huxley, Island (London: Chatto & Windus, 1966), pp. 158-171. Also, Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell (London: Chatto & Windus, 1960), pp. 60-61.

discern an underlying connection between the physical and the spiritual. This, however, requires a quiet mind, one as free as possible from distraction. In the end Calamy moves into the mountains to find refuge fromthe noise of an active life.[20]

In contrast to Calamy, Huxley presents the character of the young, cynical poet Chelifer through whom, as one critic puts it, "Huxley assumes the persona of literary intellectual deliberately seeking self-stultification."[21] Chelifer tells Calamy that there is no room in today's world for unusual minds that are not satisfied with the surface appearance of things (an attitude to be repeated by the character Mastafa Mond in Brave New World).[21a] Such people are irrelevant in a world where brutish minds predominate and a brutish reality must be confronted and accepted.[22]

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[20]Aldous Huxley, Those Barren Leaves (London: Chatto & Windus, 1925), pp. 343-348.

[21]Philip Thody, Aldous Huxley, A Biographical Introduction (London: Studio Vista, 1973), p. 88.

[21a]Laurence Brander in his work Aldous Huxley: A Critical Study takes such statements as this as characterizing the whole of Huxley's thought. Thus he ends up arguing that Huxley should be studied within the context of Ortega Y. Gasset's theme of The Revolt of the Masses. It is true that Huxley disparages the rise of the "common man" when he speaks of the "New Stupid" and saw a threat to civilized living in the mediocrity and gullibility of the "masses." It is probably going too far, however, to equate Huxley's attitude (especially in his later years) with the despairing one which seems to underline Ortega's work. The "masses" are ultimately individual's for Huxley and the object is to create an environment where they can realize their potential as such rather than be condemned to the atomization characterisitic of the modern Western life-style.

[22]Those Barren Leaves, op. cit., pp. 370-1. A

Chelifer and Calamy symbolize Huxley's view of the choice open to the educated Western man of the 1920's. European man's indulgence in the sciences and arts is not, in Huxley's view, capable of sustaining him in the face of politics and war fortified by technology. Without some new approach to life such war and propagandistic politics will follow one upon the other and force the adoption of some variation on the theme of Chelifer's bitter cynicism. The new approach Huxley puts forth is in large part imported from the East (though it does partake of an ancient Christian mystical tradition as well) and this makes it even more of a complete challenge to the times.

The possibility of a life-style in which the life of the flesh and that of the spirit are brought to compliment each other had not yet matured in Huxley's mind at the time he wrote Those Barren Leaves. In 1925 the major positive worth of the life of the spirit was interpreted to be its ability to undercut the vacuity which he judged inherent in the life of the hedonist or cynic. Huxley wrote in reference to Those Barren Leaves, "The main theme of it is the undercutting of everything by a sort of despairing scepticism and then the undercutting of that by mysticism."[23] As Sybille Bedford, Huxley's biographer, notes, however, Those Barren

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similar view is expressed by Ambassador Bahu in Huxley's last novel Island.

[23] Letters, op. cit., p. 234, Huxley to Robert Nichols, Oct. 5, 1924.

Leaves marks "a signpost in Aldous's development."[24] From the mid-1920's on into the 1930's he was cautiously investigating avenues to spiritual growth and in so doing was moving toward formulating means by which the spirit's development could be pursued without retreating from the psycho-physical world of modern man.[25]

Huxley's major early fiction makes it clear that his basic ideas were still evolving and he had not as yet come to any firm answers. His cynicism of the 1920's was never so deep-seated as to override his willingness to experiment with ideas that might help man to transcend alienation and humanize his world. This open-mindedness was able to survive the frustrations of physical illness and political decay and open the way to a growing optimism that can be seen in Huxley's work from the publication of Eyeless in Gaza (1936) onward.

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[24]Bedford, I, op. cit., p. 153.

[25]In April of 1925 Huxley wrote to Robert Nichols, "Every at all conscious man stands alone, surrounded by other solitary individuals and fragments of the old tribe, for which he feels no respect. Obviously, the only thing to do is to go right through with the process; to realize individuality to the full, the real individuality, Lao-Tsz[u]'s individuality, the Yogis' individuality, and with it the openess of everything. Obviously! But the difficulty is huge. And meanwhile the world is peopled with miserable beings who are neither one thing nor the other; who are solitary and yet not complete individuals . . . For them love and humility are impossible. And hence everything else of any value is also impossible of achievement. What's to be done about it? That's the great question. Some day I may find some sort of answer." Letters, op. cit., pp. 245-6. By 1934 Huxley is definitely approaching this problem in ways that take into account the fact that most men must remain socially active beings. He writes to his brother Julian

II

In the process of thinking on the problem of overcoming what he believed to be the spiritual emptiness of men bound to a mass, technological environment, Huxley began to use an analogy which, it seemed to him, adequately described the scope of human dimensions. Man, he concluded, is an "amphibious" being, that is a creature who has become adapted to many different environments: physical, mental and spiritual.[26] A very old distinction and thus not at all original with Huxley, it is nonetheless an idea that helped clarify the problem of human nature for him and he proceeded to expound on this theme of "amphibious" man, infusing it with new insights.[27] Huxley goes on to observe that unlike other amphibious animals, man dwells in all his different environments simultaneously and a large portion of his present

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on July 22 of that year, "I've always felt that it was vitally necessary for people to have some efficient technique for personal development--for obviously sociological and mechanical improvements can't produce their best effects on people who are mentally and spiritually undeveloped and barbarous. It seems to me quite possible that some modification of this yoga technique may provide what's needed. . . ." Ibid., p. 382. Finally, see the compments of Alan Watts on the evolution of Huxley's attitudes in Watts' autobiography, In My Own Way (N.Y.: Pantheon Books, 1972), p. 342.

[26]See AH, "Education of an Amphibian," op. cit., pp. 9-38. As early as 1929 Huxley seemed to be thinking along these lines for we can see a prelude to the use of the amphibian analogy in his comparison of man's nature to the hydra. See "Spinoza's Worm" in Do What You Will, (London:, Watts & Co., 1936), pp. 57-58, 61-62, 63-64.

[27]Sybille Bedford, Huxley's biographer, writes, "Simultaneous existence in a dozen parallel worlds--this is

alienation stems from a lack of touch with one or other of them. If modern man's alienation is to be overcome it must be through a fulfilling of what Huxley believed to be basic needs characteristics of each level of his existence.

To take the simplest of examples: everyone knows he or she has a body, though Huxley was convinced from personal experience, not everyone is as fully aware of his body's functioning and potential. Most people misuse or abuse their body, never develop their muscles or "mechanical" aptitudes. Huxley referred to this majority in Island as "sitting-addicts."[28] Likewise, everyone knows he has a mind, but there too there is abuse and misuse, potential is not tapped and, just as with one's muscles, one's mental faculties can atrophy. Finally, only a few people, Huxley believes, fully know themselves as spirit, those rare minds with strong mystical leanings. That (except, as we shall see, for some individual thinkers) the interaction of these three worlds is not systematically encouraged led Huxley to find certain aspects of Western culture and education profoundly lacking.[29]

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what always exercised Aldous's mind. What most of us most of the time choose to ignore . . . was for Aldous evident philosophical and literary raw material." Aldous Huxley, A Biography, I, op. cit., p. 155. For an example of Huxley's

[28] Island, op. cit., pp. 143-143.

[29] See "Education on the Nonverbal Level," op. cit., passim. Also see AH's letter to H. Osmond, April 10, 1953 in which he suggests that "under the current dispensation the vast majority of individuals lose, in the course of education,

While Huxley noted that the West's "mass" culture took little notice of this "amphibious" aspect of human existence, it was also his opinion that under the circumstances, the vast and complicated nature of each dimension does not come to consciousness unless the individual undergoes some form of stress powerful enough to dislodge his awareness from the routine of everyday existence.[30] For Huxley personally the required stress took the form of severe mental and physical problems.[31] Even crippling illness, however,

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all the openness to inspiration, all the capacity to be aware of other things than those enumerated in the Sears-Roebuck catalogue which constitutes the conventionally 'real' world." He goes on to talk of the need of spiritual development. Letters, op. cit., p. 669. Finally see AH's letter to H. Osmond of Jan. 25th, 1954, Ibid., p. 695.

[30]Huxley agrees with Henri Bergson's hypothesis that the mind is essentially "a utilitarian device for limiting, and making selections from, the enormous possible world of consciousness, and for canalizing experience into biologically profitable channels." Modern society's socialization process has further refined, rather than broken down, this inhibiting function. Now only such things as "disease, mescaline, emotional shock, aesthetic experience and mystical enlightenment have the power, each in its different way and in varying degrees, to inhibit the functions of the normal self and its ordinary brain activity . . . ." AH to H. Osmond, April 10, 1953, Ibid., p. 668. Sidney Cohen expresses the same idea in The Beyond Within (N.Y.: Antheneum, 1966), p. 238.

[31]For Jean Cocteau awareness required that he adopt an opium habit which "changes our speeds, procures for us a very clear awareness of worlds which are superimposed on each other, but do not even suspect each other's existence." Opium, The Diary of a Cure, trans. by M. Crosland and S. Road (London: Peter Owen, Ltd., 1957), p. 88. Carlos Castaneda (a California anthropologist and university teacher) found awareness by spending ten years as the apprentice to a Yaqui sorcerer, that is a man from a totally alien culture and with a totally alien concept of the world. Castaneda writes that this apprenticeship led him to experience "a number of states of non-ordinary reality." Firsthand knowledge of these states "would,

cannot be relied upon to shake the great mass of people out of being their physically conditioned selves. Huxley knew this (and it fed a persisting pessimism over the fate of man in "mass" society) and was led to become interested in finding and popularizing ways that at least the individual so inclined might come to an awareness of his multi-dimensionality.[31a] Such an awareness, which he saw as a form of self-transcendence, is a pre-requisite to achieving one's full potential. He writes in "Education on the Nonverbal Level":

> 'Know thyself.' From time immemorial that has been the advice of seers and philosophers. The self that they urge 'us' to know is not, of course, the stylized persona with which . . . we try to become identified; it is the multiple amphibian, the inhabitant of all those incompatible worlds that we must somehow learn to make the best of.32

The interest Huxley has in self-awareness comes through in most of his essays, monographs, and later fiction, which often take on a didactic style. It is in this work of the 1940's, 50's and early 60's that he most successfully develops his notions of man-as-amphibian. In the two short works, The

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soòner or later, make the classifications 'ordinary' and 'nonordinary' meaningless to me. The bona fide adoption of the first unit of conceptual order would have entailed then, the idea that there was another separate, but no longer unordinary, realm of reality. . . ." Carlos Castaneda, Teachings of Don Juan, (L.A.: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1971), p. 176.

[31a]See AH to Miss Hepworth and Mr. Green, dated early 1942 in which Huxley talks of the importance and practical possibility of an educational process that conforms "to the nature of things." "Given mysticism and such psycho-physical techniques as the Bates method and the Alexander method, it is possible to conceive of a totally new kind of education starting at the level of bodily functions and going up to the heights of the spirit." Letters, op. cit., p. 473-4.

[32]Op. cit., p. 280.

Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell Huxley explains the nuances and complexities of the mental dimension, especially in those areas where the mind overlaps the spiritual dimension. Huxley writes, "A man consists of what I may call an Old World of personal consciousness,"

> and, beyond a dividing sea, a series of New Worlds - the not too distant Virginias and Carolinas of the personal subconscious and the vegetative soul; the Far West of the collective subconscious, with its flora of symbols, its tribes of aboriginal archetypes; and, across another, vaster ocean, at the antipodes of everyday consciousness, the world of Visionary Experience."[33]

The antipodes to which Huxley refers is a region of which few of us are aware. What prevents awareness and stands between this region and our conscious is the state of mind which we adopt to insure our physical survival within the natural environment, and the survival of our egos within our limiting social environment. Here we have Henri Bergson's notion of the brain as an inhibiting and selecting device.[34] As Huxley puts it, the brain functions as a "cerebral reducing

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[33]Aldous Huxley, Heaven and Hell in The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell (London: Chatto & Windus, 1960), p. 74. A parallel can be drawn with Castaneda's experience. It is to prepare him for making contact with the "antipodes" of the mind that Don Juan urges Castaneda to cease believing that the ordinary is the only reality. Following Don Juan's lead Castaneda finds that "in successive states of nonordinary reality the specific forms, the details making up the form, the patterns in which the component elements were combined became progressively unfamiliar." Teachings of Don Juan, op. cit., pp. 171-2.

[34]See Henri Bergson, Matter and Memory, trans. by N. Paul and W. Scott Palmer (London: Swan, Sonnenschein, 1911), pp. 19-21, 208-212.

valve."[35] Referring to the implications of this theory, Huxley writes:

> "According to such a theory each one of us is potentially Mind at Large. But in so far as we are animals, our business is at all costs to survive. To make biological survival possible, Mind at Large has to be funnelled through the reducing valve of the brain and nervous system. What comes out at the other end is a measely trickle of the kind of consciousness which will help us to stay alive on the surface of this particular planet. To formulate and express the contents of this reduced awareness, man has invented and endlessly elaborated those symbol-systems and implicit philosophies which we call language."[36]

The mind, now looking after the individual's survival in society as well as in nature, organizes its perceptions to fit into a language system. This means the eye and the ear will see and hear only in terms familiar to them.[37] Add to

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[35] Doors of Perception in Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell, op. cit., pp. 16-17.

[36] The Doors of Perception, loc. cit., Cocteau has described the resulting limited state of human perception in more prosaic terms,

> "It is very strange that hardly anyone lives with any feeling for the centuries which pass between each breath we take, for the worlds created and destroyed by our body, that the idea of our body's darkness conceals the fires which inhabit it, and that a difference in measurement renders incomprehensible the fact that these worlds might be civilized or dead . . . .
>
> In spite of faith, God would sicken us. The wisdom of Moses was to confine men to their tiny houses."

Cocteau, op. cit., p. 92.

[37] See AH, "Country Ecstacies," in Texts and Pretexts (London: Chatto & Windus, 1927), pp. 21-22, and "Culture and the Individual," in David Solomon, ed., LSD: The Consciousness Expanding Drug (N.Y.: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1966), p. 39.

this other forms of social conditioning in which new generations are taught to see things generally in terms of the last and you have the process in which fixed patterns of actions and reactions are built up. We are deemed human to the extent that we internalize our particular society's patterns.[38]

Huxley considers it one of the great virtues of perception in terms of the antipodes of the mind that it is relatively free of conditioning and ties to language. In other words, in the world of visionary experience we seem to break the bonds of socialization and perceive in a praternatural way. This is why mystics and those experiencing the effects of psychedelics[39] report indescribable perceptions of enhanced color and light. Huxley's own report of perceptions of this kind reads as follows:

> Their colour (that hallmark of givenness) shines forth with a brillance which seems to us praternatural, because it is in fact entirely natural. Entirely natural in the sense of being entirely unsophisticated by language. . . . . or utilitarian notions.40

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[38]See AH. "Knowledge and Understanding," in Collected Essays (Toronto: Clarke Irwin & Co., 1960), p. 386.

[39]Huxley believed that psychedelic substances could facilitate mystical and visionary experiences. See both Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell, op. cit., passim. In a letter to Victoria Ocampo, July 19, 1956, Huxley wrote, "How strange that we should all carry about with us this enormous universe of vision and that which lies beyond vision, and yet be mainly unconscious of the fact! How can we learn to pass at will from one world of consciousness to the other? Mescalin and lysergic acid will open the door . . . ." Letters, op. cit., p. 802.

[40]Heaven and Hell, op. cit., p. 80. In a recorded

The brilliance that Huxley describes is at once both terrifying, awe-inspiring and distractive to the point of being incompatible with the necessary comings and goings of everyday conscious existence and that is why, of course, they must be "filtered out" of conscious awareness. In the process, however, what Huxley considers to be the utilitarian but drab residue becomes the totality of reality for most. This is a value judgement on Huxley's part that follows directly and consistently from his critique of Western "busyness."

As the body's environment is the physical world bounded by time, so the environment of the spirit trancends time and the physical world. Minds made aware of their antipodes, Huxley felt, might then be able to link the two worlds and thus allow men to identify themselves equally with their

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lecture titled "Visionary Experience" (the second record of a two part series of Talks on the Human Condition, Giffard Assoc., N.Y.) Huxley asks whether man's liking for gems, colorful pagentry, fireworks, etc. does not reflect a subconscious identification of these things with the perceptual state native to the antipodes of the mind.

There seem to be a number of people who regularly have these visionary percpetions, including a small number of mystics, seers like Castaneda's Don Juan, and some artists and writers whose sensitivity to nature goes far beyond that of the average persons'. Wordsworth, for example, displays seemingly praternatural awareness when he says in his "Intimations of Immortality":

> There was a time when meadow, grove,
> and stream,
> The earth, and every common sight,
> to me did seem
> Apparelled in celestial light.

Finally, we might add a fourth group who undergo visionary experiences. This is made up of small children who, prior to social conditioning retain an outlook that sees everything as fresh.

spiritual and physical dimensions.[41] Ultimately, he believed this expanded consciousness would lead an individaul to an awareness of his spiritual oneness with the "Divine Ground of all being," that is, awareness of one's unity with "Mind at Large" or God.

Here again Huxley must be seen in the light of his intellectual debt to the thought of Henri Bergson. Bergson distinguishes between two ways of perceiving the world, through the intellect or through understanding. The intellect is a practical tool, concerning itself with analysis and the processing of useful knowledge. While the knowledge it makes known to us is useful, the intellect cannot give us "truth" because reality cannot be divided up and this is exactly the tactic employed in the conceptualizing intellect's approach to the world. Huxley essentially says the same thing, though he does not approach the problem as philosophically as Bergson. The world, Huxley asserts, is more than the sum of its parts, a fact he feels full self-awareness would render understandable. In order to survive as animals, however, mankind has--up until this time--been forced to deal with

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[41]Huxley does not believe that the mind's obligations to the body's survival in nature represent insurmountable obstacles to the mind's capacity to facilitate spiritual awareness. Unlike many orthodox religions, he held that the body and the spirit are two sides of the same coin and that a full awareness of the potentials of both are necessary to self-fulfillment. See Huxley's essay, "Education of an Amphibian" in AH, Adonis and the Alphabet (London: Chatto & Windus, 1956), passim.

parts at the expense of a clear sense of the living whole.

What sense of the whole we do get is a function, according to Bergson, of the understanding. The understanding, operates through intuition which alone can grasp reality as a continuum, a ubiquitous "life-force" inherent in all particular modes of experience. Intuition is the perceptual approach most familiar to mystics and poets. In Huxley's terms it is the highly developed ability of a fortunate and select few to see the world at will in terms of the antipodes of the mind, to consciously be able to shut down their analytical, socialized way of perceiving. Though he will later urge that the upbringing of children should encourage the development of this "intuitive" sense (and, he felt, everyone was born with greater or lesser ability to perceive in this manner) the main question for him is always how to do so. Here is the difference between him and Bergson. Huxley is a "pragmatic" philosopher, always insisting on practice to make theory meaningful. Thus he will always be on the lookout for means to help those whose natural intuitive capacities are somehow blocked. His major example of such a person was himself for he believed himself to be analytical to a fault.

As Amphibians all men share a common nature consisting of mind, body and spirit. In respect to their particular minds and bodies, however, they differ greatly. An awareness of the importance of this common nature must be preceded by an understanding (in Webster's now, rather than Bergson's

terms) of human differences. Furthermore, once such an understanding is achieved, Huxley believed, tolerance and compassion on the individual level become much more possible.[42]

III

Huxley was not only interested in the psychic structure common to all human beings, but he was also fascinated by the psycho-physical differences between men. As a young man Huxley was of the opinion these differences formed such unbridgable barriers that a kind of "war" existed between different types and personalities. In 1927, when he was thirty-three years old, he wrote,

> In the war between [different psycho-physical types of people] there can be no Mosieur Romain Rolland au-dessus de la mêlée. There are no psychological Scandinavians or Swiss. You cannot conscientiously object to taking sides in the quarrel: you are a combatant whether you like it or not, because nature has conscribed you on one side or another . . . before you even were born. The only honest thing to do is admit your spiritual nationality, and either fight for your cause or else, if you don't want to fight, admit the irreconcilable differences between yourself and your opponents, and agree to differ without any more superfluous argumentation."[43]

These ideas were shaped by Huxley's early cynicism. Later he will cease to think in terms of combatants and come to see men in terms of mental and physical diversity having their

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[42]See AH, Ends and Means (London: Chatto & Windus, 1937), pp. 348-349.

[43]Aldous Huxley, "Variations of Intelligence," in Proper Studies (London: Chatto & Windus, 1927), p. 48.

foundation in spiritual unity. Spiritual self-awareness giving rise to tolerance and understanding of pshcyo-physical differences will bridge those "irreconcilable differences."

To know how to go about building such bridges between people with different psycho-physical make-ups one must first understand the nature of these differences. It was from Prof. W. H. Sheldon, a scientist who did much work in the classification of body and personality types, that Huxley learnt of progress toward scientifically establishing the relationship between psychological makeup and body types.[44] Huxley first met Sheldon in 1937 while passing through Chicago. Sheldon told him of his work and Huxley was sufficiently impressed to write the following to his brother Julian on Dec. 6, 1937:

> I met in Chicago a very remarkable man called Sheldon, a psychologist, who has been working for ten years in the field that Kretschmer worked in and who has evolved, I believe, a genuinely scientific conception of psychological types--or rather of the typological factors present in varying amounts in different individuals. He seems to me to have evolved a genuine algebra in terms of which to discuss the problem, so that it now becomes possible to talk concretely, quantitatively and scientifically on a subject about which one cd (sic) only speculate in a vaguely intuitive, personal way."[45]

Sheldon classified human-beings into three types: (1) an endomorphic physique and a viscerotonic temperament

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[44] William H. Sheldon's two major works are The Varieties of Human Physique (N.Y.: Harper, 1940) and The Varieties of Temperament (N.Y.: Harper & Bros., 1942).

[45] Letters, op. cit., p. 428.

generally characterized by a need for comfort and other people's company), (2) a mesomorphic physique and a somototonic temperament (characterized by a love of physical activity and an aggressive personality), and (3) an ectomorphic physique and cerebrotonic temperament (characterized by introversion, a need for privacy, etc.). Huxley felt that a refined version of Sheldon's classification could, if popularized, broaden man's understanding of the causes of their psycho-physical differences and the different reactions they engender to different circumstances.[46] Understanding, then, might encourage tolerance among men. Speaking of Sheldon's work in an article titled "Who Are You?" Huxley asserts:

> Having determined the statics of physique and the closely related dynamics of temperament, we can begin to think in a genuinely intelligent and fruitful way about the environment and the individual's reaction to it. Moreover, to understand is to [be more apt to] forgive; and when we realize that the people who are different from us did not get that way out of wickedness or perversity, when we understand that many

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[46] Huxley, did not hold that body type was the only determinant of personality. Culture, family upbringing, as well as other factors all play a role. Generally, however, he feels that people with certain physiques would tend to react to their environments within the broad limits of their corresponding Sheldonian temperaments. It must be pointed out that all Sheldon and Huxley were attempting to do is demonstrate the connection between physique and personality and the insight this can give us into behavior. As an attempt to exhaustively classify personality, it is generally recognized that Sheldon's categories are inadequate (as are those of introversion and extroversion layed down by Carl Jung in 1923). For a more exhaustive attempt at creating an adequate typology see Dr. Humphry Osmond, Understanding Understanding (N.Y.: Bantam Books, 1974), passim.

> of the profoundest of such differences are constitutional and that constitution cannot be changed, only made the best of, we may perhaps learn to be more tolerant, more intelligently charitable than we are at present.47

Huxley was enthusiastic about Sheldon's work and its potential place in a progressive, "amphibious" oriented educational program because he believed that modern Western society fails to take account of the basic differences between men in such a way as to provide outlets for their positive expression. In turn, this failure often leads to a stunting of the personality. Huxley took his belief a step further by asserting that Western society now favors the "somatotonic" or agressive personality and that the results, in an age marked by its capacity for destruction, are increasingly negative. Huxley reasons that as the old anti-violent Christian ethics loose their hold over men (though one can certainly argue that they never effectively prevented violence) the aggressive nature of the somatotonic becomes more acceptable. Indeed, a basically aggressive manner becomes the mark of a "successful" attitude whatever one's goals or career and no longer a behavioral trait best fitted to just a warrior class. On March 4, 1943, in the midst of World War Two, Huxley wrote to his brother Julian:

> There exists, as Sheldon makes clear, a certain percentage of people--he calls them 'Somatotonics'--who are constitutionally aggressive, who love risk and adventure for their own sake, who lust for power and dominance, who are psychologically callous and

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47 Harper's Magazine, 189. (Nov. 1944), p. 520.

> have no squeamishness about killing, who are insensitive to pain and tirelessly energetic. How can these be prevented from wrecking the world? Christianity tried to keep them down by means of a . . . system of ethical restraints. But there has been a revolt against . . . religion and ethics during the last 25 years and the somatotonics are in the saddle, not only physically, but also intellectually and philosophically.48

Given the world situation in 1943 it is easy to understand Huxley's attitude. Today his statement must be considered to be, in certain aspects, exaggerated. One can distinguish degrees of aggressiveness not all of which are negative (Freud would suggest that there is a connection between innate aggressiveness and the life-force). Many of the world's present leaders, social, political and economic, while basically forceful personalities, would not fit all aspects of the description Huxley gives above. Yet the suggestion that potentially negative and destructive aggressive behavior is often aggrandized in the West rings

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48 Letters, op. cit., p. 487. Also see Aldous Huxley, "Religion and Temperament" in Vedanta for the Modern World, ed. by Christopher Isherwood (N.Y.: Viking Press, 1960), p. 100.

The danger inherent in a somatotonically dominated world has been noted by Humphry Osmond in his article. "Psychopharmacology and the Manipulation of the Mind": "This is an age when we need above all Ulysses, the man who thinks his way out of trouble, rather than Achilles, Hector and the Ajaxes who hack, cut, or butt at it. Such men may have been heroic once, but now they are simply suicidal. Solomon, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

The major deficiency in Sheldon's typology is that it fails to take account of the intuitive, future oriented personality who, when possessed of charismatic features, can be just if not more dangerous to society than the somatotonic. Huxley himself seemed not to give sufficient regard to this personality type.

true even today (for example through a good many television programs). Further, Huxley implies that the association of attitudes on what constitutes social and economic success with somatotonic traits discourages those who possess such characteristics from empathizing with people unlike them. Children are often allowed to see behavior unlike their own as signs of weakness. When such children grow up, their individual aggressiveness (and the national aggressiveness it may feed) make for a hostile and dangerous world. Again, this might be an oversimplification of the problem, yet Huxley's main concern must be well taken. Their is no systematic ethic, taught to young or old, to stem the tide of a growing acceptance of often negative aggressive individual and national behavior.

Huxley equated modern society's stress on the aggressive personality with its emphasis on the ill-trained mental and physical dimensions and the near exclusion of the spiritual.[49] He ultimately sees the latter as the most dangerous. Most people, unaware of their spiritual dimension common to all people, believe themselves to be solely psycho-physical entities, caught up in a crowded mass society, yet forever separated from each other.

Many thinkers besides Huxley have made this observation. For instance, Karl Jaspers is of the opinion that

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[49]We find this notion implied throughout Huxley's two articles on amphibiousness, "Education on the Nonverbal Level" and "Education of an amphibian," op. cit., passim.

the largely secular character of modern, mass technological society breeds a feeling of "unprecedented vacancy of existence," ultimately resulting in the loss of any real feeling of community.[49a] To regain a fully human existence requires an infusion of spiritual purpose and belief. Huxley agrees and goes further with the opinion that, what he considers to be the delusion that we are only psycho-physical beings, has led to an unprecedented level of individual and social anxiety and hostility.[50] If one assumes that the ego is incapable of transcending its psycho-physical separateness the result is an ultimate incapacity to communicate and thus misunderstanding and strife.[51]

[49a] Karl Jaspers, Man in the Modern Age (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1951), pp. 25-26, 44-68. Although Jaspers had no direct influence on Huxley, they agree on this point. One reason for this is to be found in the fact that both were active intellectuals during the interwar period and both seemed to respond to the West's frantic secular nature, its uncritical approach to technological development, in a similar way.

[50] Should someone deluded in this way take a psychedelic drug like mescalin the result is often a "bad-trip". As Huxley writes in Heaven and Hell, "Fear and anger bar the way to the heavenly Other World and plunge the mescalin taker into hell." Op. cit., p. 115.

[51] The answer Huxley would give to the problem of individual and national aggressiveness would not, then, limit itself to teaching children to understand Sheldonian typology as a way of promoting a greater ability to empathize with those who are different. Huxley sought to go further by stimulating in each individual an awareness of the common nature that lies behind their psycho-physical differences. An empathetic understanding of psycho-physical diversity can only come with an understanding of man's spiritual sameness. It is to be noted that their is the implication here, and there can be little doubt that it reflects Huxley's true opinion, that almost everyone has the capacity to be aware of his spiritual dimension.

IV

Huxley's conception of man as being "amphibian" led him to reject commonly accepted conclusions on normal perception and behavior. In his essay "Mescaline and the Other World," Huxley observed:

> Statistical normality is not the only kind of normality. There is also something that may be called absolute normality. An absolutely normal human being may be defined as one whose psychophysical organism is functioning at its highest potential, to the limit of its native capacities. The statistically normal but absolutely abnormal majority of human being perceive the world as stale, boring and meaningless. The absolutely normal, but statistically abnormal minority suffer from what the majority call a hallucination, and perceive it as fresh, living, blazing with light and charged with infinite significance."[52]

Huxley asserted that the characteristics of "absolutely normal" human beings remained constant, transcending all cultural or temporal boundaries. The statistically normal person, on the other hand, is one whose behavior and perceptions are in keeping with what is standard at any time. This transitory quality of what is normal is not so obvious to most people. The characteristics of statistical normality are thought of as absolute. There are serious consequences to such a view. Erich Fromm has described what he calls a "pathology of normalcy" by which he means "low grade chronic forms of psychosis which can be shared by millions of people." "As long as they share their sickness

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[52] In LSD and Experimental Psychiatry ed. by Louis Cholden, M.D. (N.Y.: Grune & Stratton, 1956), p. 78.

with millions of others," he goes on, "they have the satisfactory feeling of not being alone. . . . . They look at themselves as normal and at those who have not lost the the link between heart and mind as being 'crazy.'"[53] When the normal is the psychotic it is not difficult to see how intolerant and inhuman attitudes become widespread.

Huxley thought that one of the most glaring examples of what we have described here as "pathology of normalcy" was the uncritical acceptance of extensive occupational specialization--something almost everyone thinks of as beneficial.[54] A person who either works exclusively with

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[53]Erich Fromm, The Revolution of Hope (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1968), pp. 41-43. When Fromm speaks of "the lost link between heart and mind" he is referring to rational thought devoid of emotionality. The example he uses is Herman Kahn.

[54]Huxley sees another type of specialization as detrimental to full human development. This is an aspect of specialization resulting from what he calls "intra-specific" competition that is, competition between members of the same species. He writes in Ends and Means, op. cit., p. 262. "Intra-specific competition leads to an excessively precise adaptation to a given set of circumstances--in other words, to excessive specialization. . . . For man, competition is now predominantly intra-specific. A dispassionate analysis of circumstances in which the human race now lives makes it clear that most of this intra-specific competition is not imposed by any kind of biological necessity, but is entirely gratuitous and voluntary. In other words, we are wantonly and deliberately pursuing a policy which we need not pursue and which we have the best scientific reasons for supposing to be disastrous to the species as a whole. We are using our intelligence to adapt ourselves more and more effectively to the modern conditions of intra-specific competition. We are doing our best to develop a militaristic 'hypertely' [an enlarged, over-nourished part of an organism], to become, in other words, dangerously specialized in the art of killing our fellows." See also Perennial Philosophy, (N.Y.: Harper & Bros, 1945), p. 229.

his mind, or his hands, would find it impossible to fully develop his psycho-physical potentials and thus could not be considered "absolutely normal."[55] In this way, modern economic practices both help narrow human awareness and constrict human potential.

If modern social and economic institutions encourage specialization, the result of which is an environment which works against being normal in the absolute sense, how then is man to escape the fate of the statistically normal? Huxley's answer is, in part, based on his knowledge of mystic philosophy. As noted above Huxley began to take note of mysticism in the mid-1920's, when he was around 31. A survey of his letters beginning in 1925 shows he read not only the Christian mystics but also the Lao Tsu[56] and works of other Buddist and Hindu mystics. He seemed to be more inclined toward the Eastern mystical style (though ultimately he found that there existed a common denominator among all mystical teachings) probably because they work from a set of standard awareness-expanding exercises which can be practised by almost anyone.[57] It is practical means to achievable ends

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[55] In an article titled "Cenorship and Spoken Literature" Huxley refers to many of the mind-oriented specialists as "highly trained barbarians." Adonis and the Alphabet, op. cit., pp. 124-5. In his positive utopia, Island, Huxley devises a rotation method of work so that everyone will get to do a bit of every type of labor, mental and physical. Op. cit., pp. 148-9.

[56] Letters, op. cit., Huxley to R. Nichols, April 10, 1925, p. 245.

[57] Ibid., Huxley to T. Leary, Feb. 11, 1962, p. 929.

that Huxley is interested in even when it comes to something so seemingly esoteric as individual spirituality.

Among other means, Huxley specifically emphasizes the importance of cultivating what the mystics call "disinterested virtue." He writes at the beginning of Ends and Means:

> "All the ideals of human behaviour formulated by those who have been most successful in freeing themselves from the prejudices of their time and place are singularly alike. Liberation from prevailing conventions of thought, feeling and behaviour is accomplished most effectively by the practise of disinterested virtues and through direct insight into the real nature of ultimate reality."[58]

See also "Education on the Nonverbal Level," op. cit., pp. 283-4 and Island, op. cit., passim.

In January of 1929 Huxley met Gerald Heard (Heard came to the United States with Huxley in 1937). Both Heard and Huxley seem to have evolved into pacifism together (see Letters, op. cit., Huxley to V. Ocampo July, 1936, p. 408) and their interest in mysticism also seems to have grown simultaneously. Heard founded a religious community in California of which he became a guru-like leader (Ibid., Huxley to C. Isherwood, Feb. 7, 1942, p. 475). It is doubtful, however, that Heard's guru-style practise was influential on Huxley, though the long-standing intellectual interaction of the two men must be taken into account to understand Huxley's interest in Eastern mysticism (see Sybille Bedford, Aldous Huxley, A Biography, II (London: Chatto & Windus, 1974), pp. 42-43, 81-82.

Huxley also had a long-standing acquaintance with the Eastern religious teacher Jiddu Krishnamurti whom he met about 1938. Krishnamurti taught the use of certain Zen-like practices which Huxley followed for a time (Letters, op. cit., Huxley to Hubert Benoit, Nov. 5, 1949, p. 608). He also knew D. T. Suzuki, a leading authority on Mahayana Buddhism (Ibid., Huxley to Elise Murrell, Nov. 4, 1951, p. 638 and Huxley to Roger Godel, Dec. 23, 1951, p. 639).

[58] Op. cit., pp. 2-3. See also the chapter on education in the same work, especially pp. 219-221.

The disinterested practice of virtue, in which one's behavior is free of double standards and ulterior motives, requires that one ceases to perceive reality in the conventional way. One must liberate one's senses from social conditioning which encourages feelings of hate and anger. Many of Huxley 's later fictional characters display this trait. For instance, the figure of Mr. Propter in After Many a Summer,[59] and that of Dr. Miller in Eyeless in Gaza.[60] Both men are surrounded by ugliness and savagery and yet they sustain an outlook that sees the world as "fresh" and "light-filled" and full of potential. They, as many of the characters in Huxley's Island, perceive unconventionally and do so in such an outgoing way that they positively effect most of those with whom they come into contact.

In other words, these characters are pictures of "absolute normality." While they are admirably portrayed in his work, Huxley leaves no doubt that the path they exemplify is an arduous one by keeping the context of his work down to earth and realistic. Nevertheless, Huxley is convinced that, if the horrors of history are not to be endlessly repeated, the disinterested outlook of the mystics and his own fictional heros must be nurtured in the now "statistically normal" majority--or, at least, as many as can be persuaded to take

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[59]Aldous Huxley, After Many a Summer (London: Chatto & Windus, 1950), passim.

[60]Aldous Huxley, Eyeless in Gaza (London: Chatto & Windus, 1936), pp. 547-563.

up the call. Yet, how? By Huxley's own admission, the nature of modern society works against this goal and to bring forth edifying works is no effective counterbalance. Prior to the 1950's he can only advocate meditation and self-discipline--hardly a call to rouse the masses. Dissatisfied with this limited approach, he kept searching for better ways of developing empathy, compassion and disinterestedness[60a] and, in the meantime, broadened out his concept of the complimentary nature of the different dimensions of man's multiple nature.

It was important to Huxley that an awareness of the spiritual dimension be attained without an abandonment of the world of the body (he disapproved of the approach taken in Catholic and Hinayana Buddhist religious orders). This is a point that must be underscored. Huxley did not call a spiritual rebirth at the cost of psychologically abandoning one's physical self. The reason for such an emphasis lies once more in a personal experience during the mid-1920's. Shortly after completing Those Barren Leaves in which he has the character Calamy literally head for the hills to escape physical distractions, Huxley himself headed out on an around-

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[60a] Huxley once wrote, "Unfortunately, good ideals are never enough. Unless they are accompanied by full instructions regarding the methods by which they may be realized, they are almost useless. Hell is paved with good intentions, and whole periods of history have been made hideous or grotesque by enthusiastic idealists who failed to elaborate the means whereby their lofty aspirations might be effectively, and above all harmlessly, implemented." AH, "Education on the Nonverbal Level," op. cit., p. 281.

the-world tour which took him first to India. His experiences are recounted in his travel book, Jesting Pilate.[61] Here he recounts his revulsion with the poverty and despair of the Indian masses and he attributes this state of physical destitution to a too exclusive a concentration on spirituality.

> It is this preoccupation with 'spiritual' realities different from the actual historical realities of common life that has kept millions upon millions of men and women content, through centuries, with a lot unworthy of human beings.[62]

There must be a balance, Huxley concluded, between the physical and the spiritual, each recognized as legitimate and indispensable to "amphibious" man. On the one hand, personal spiritual awareness lay at the foundation of any adequately humane social philosophy since, he thought, without this aspect of self-knowledge men deny their full amphibious selves and thus experience the world and shape the social environment on the basis of a denial of their full character.[63] On the other hand, to deny the legitimacy of bodily desires would be, as India's society proved to Huxley, just as distortive of the true nature of man as is the modern exclusive emphasis

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[61]Aldous Huxley, Jesting Pilate (London: Chatto & Windus, 1926).

[62]Ibid., p. 109.

[63]Huxley writes in "Seven Meditations," that "the nature of what we experience is determined by what we ourselves are." In Vedanta for the Modern World, Viking Compass Book (N.Y.: Viking Press, 1971), p. 166. See also Perennial Philosophy op. cit., p. 179. Hence experiencing the world as a non-attached, "absolutely normal" person is dependent upon movement toward spiritual self-awareness.

on his psycho-physical aspects.[64]

Thus whatever means he might search out for the achievement of spiritual self-awareness must be compatible with the realization of psycho-physical potential. Here the Eastern path seems as unenlightened as the Western Christian one. By the early 1950's Huxley concluded that the most practical means toward this end was to be found in the judicious use of psychedelics.[65] Here, he hoped lay a way of channelling the supposedly instinctual urge to self-transcendence, through a medium productive of states of mind to which religious interpretations could be attached. In addition, all the evidence available to him at the time indicated the potentially positive alterations in perception produced by these drugs came both quickly and with a minimum risk to health.[66]

For Buddhists it is a long-standing doctrine that what one experiences is a function of what one is. See Edward Conze, Buddhism (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1951), p. 156.

[64]It is in Island that Huxley tries to show us in fiction how such a balance should be affected. Op. cit., pp. 148-150. Huxley himself was a keenly sensuous man and much appreciated the pleasures of the body. See Laura Huxley, This Timeless Moment (N.Y.: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1968), p. 128.

[65]See AH, "Drugs that Shape Men's Minds," in Collected Essays, (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Co., 1960), pp. 343-344. See also Letters, Ah to Fr. Thomas Merton, Jan. 10, 1959, op. cit., pp. 862-864.

[66]AH to Harold Raymond, June 21, 1953, Ibid., p. 678.

This does not mean that Huxley wished to see such powerful mind changing agents as LSD or mescalin liberally distributed to the population at large. He was most wary of the use of such agents without proper safeguards and guidance.[67] Huxley did hope that psychedelic experiences might be made selectively available under proper supervision and supportive conditions. Furthermore, he realized that if such experiences were to have maximum positive effect on a community they must be made available within the context of a general educational attempt to broaden self-awareness on all levels,[68] to improve the use of the body and its sense organs, and to eliminate the psychological grip he felt national ideologies and materialistic life-styles had on the minds of most people.

The use of psychedelic drugs for the purpose of spiritual revitalization is neither new nor radical. It seems to be historically true that, in those societies which sanction their use, ingestion of psychedelics was never indiscriminate.

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[67] In 1956, Huxley refused to take part in a Vancouver TV show on mescalin because of his fear of the effects of indiscriminately publicizing the use of drugs. Psychedelic drugs, he felt were to be discussed with discretion. See Letters, Huxley to H. Osmond, July 17, 1956, pp. 800-801. Thus, those who associate Huxley's ideas with the exploitation of psychedelics by many young people in the 1960's are both naive and unfair.

[68] Huxley wrote to Timothy Leary on Feb. 11, 1962: "LSD and the mushrooms should be used, it seems to me, in the context of this basic Tantrik idea of the yoga of total awareness, leading to enlightenment within the world of everyday experience . . . ." Ibid., p. 929.

For example, in primitive societies such drugs always formed part of a larger ritual which gave a meaningful context for the experiences the drugs engendered. It is from this fact that Huxley takes his cue. In Island he demonstrates how he would like to see psychedelics integrated into the educational and social framework of a society and he bolsters the use of drugs by meaningful ritual.[69] So used the drug experience is not a threat to man's integrity as a human being but rather a vital element in bridging the gap between self-aware individuality, spiritual insight and community life.

What elements of the West's modern life-style, in Hyxley's opinion, helped or hindered self-awareness and either lent themselves to or acted as barriers against the acceptance of consciousness-expanding tools such as psychedelics? In our discussion we have touched on some of Huxley's ideas concerning the social, political, and economic contexts within which the psychyo-physical dimensions of "amphibious" man must operate. It is to a more detailed study of his understanding of these aspects of modern life that we must now turn.

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[69]AH. Island, op. cit., pp. 158-170.

minister of Cardinal Richelieu. Joseph's intrigues on behalf of the expansive foreign policy of Richelieu and Louis XIII led to prolonging of the Thirty Years War at the sacrifice of his own strivings for a personal mystical union with God.[28]

Joseph lived at a time when contemplative life was considered no less worthwhile than that of the soldier or diplomat. However, to his own undoing he attempted to pursue both the vita of the contemplative and th life of the man of affairs. His case suggests that, except under the most "amphibious" of social climates, the two life-styles cannot be successfully combined. The attempt to mix the two by someone holding political power raises the real possibility of doing what the Grey Eminence did, promoting wholesale slaughter in the name of higher ideals.

On the other hand, Huxley is critical of the fact that, in our own day worldy pursuits are considered the only ones which make life meaningful. Mystical contemplation is now thought by most to be, at the very best, a waste of time. Huxley elaborates on this point when he writes:

> In the popular philosophy of our own time it goes without saying that the end of human life is action; that contemplation (above all its lower forms of discursive thought) is the means to that end; that a society is good to the extent that the actions of its members make for progress in technology and organization (a progress which is assumed to be causally related to ethical and cultural advance); and that a minority of [mystical] contemplatives is

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[28]Ibid., pp. 229-255.

CHAPTER II

ALDOUS HUXLEY'S CONCEPT OF SOCIETY

Early in his career as a writer, Huxley came to believe that the lives of the great mass of people in modern Western society--engulfed as they are by a culture which defined human needs almost exclusively in terms of material comfort and pleasures--were empty of meaning. This belief came out most clearly in the fiction of his early cynical period[1] and is also characteristic (though his tone becomes more subdued) of his middle and later years. For example, in Ends and Means, published in 1937 when Huxley was forty-three years old, he writes:

> The apparent pointlessness of modern life . . . and its lack of significance and purpose are due to the fact that, in the Western world at least, . . . the universe is regarded as a great machine pointlessly grinding its way towards ultimate stagnation and death; men are tiny offshots of the universal machine, running down to their own private deaths; physical life is the only real life; mind is a mere product of the body; personal success and material well-being are the ultimate measures of value, the things for which a reasonable person should live. Introduced suddenly to this mechanomorphic cosmology, many of the Polynesian races have refused to go on myltiplying their species and are in process of dying of a kind of psychological consumption. Europeans are of a tougher fibre than the South Sea Islanders, and besides, they have had nearly three hundred years in which to become gradually acclimatized to the new

[1] See, for example, Antic Hay, particularly the speeches of the character Coleman, op. cit., chapter five.

> cosmology. But even they have felt the effects of mechanomorphism. They move through life hollow with pointlessness, trying to fill the void within them by external stimuli--newspaper reading, day-dreaming at the films, radio music and chatter, the playing and above all the watching of games, 'good times' of every sort.2

A similar concern for society's inadequate response to human needs and, in particular, what he considered to be the demeaning of important social institutions such as the family, can be found in the first half of an article titled "Mother," which Huxley published in 1956. Here he describes his thoughts on a visit to the "Worlds Largest Drugstore" with its "fifty-four feet long, many tiered rack" of greeting cards.[3] Coming to the Mother's Day cards, Huxley muses on the fact that this over-sentimentalized Mother's Day is all that is left of that great ancient cult of the Great Mother that gave rise to most of the world's religions. Our modern world has so commercialized motherhood that the contemporary "Great Mother" depicted by the greeting cards "inhabits a delicious Disneyland, where everything is syrup and Technicolor, cuteness and schmalz."[4] Huxley is finally led to ask with obvious frustration, "How is it that we have permitted ourselves

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[2] Op. cit., pp. 123-124. In his fiction, Huxley portrays this "good times" oriented life-style in the character of Uncle Eustace in Time Must Have a Stop (N.Y.: Harper and Bros., 1944) passim.

[3] AH, "Mother," in Adonis and the Alphabet, op. cit., p. 169. The same shallowness in outlook and life-style is represented in Huxley's last novel, Island, by the character Murugan whose favorite reading is a Sears, Roebuck Catalogue. Op. cit., chapter nine.

[4] AH. "Mother," op. cit., p. 170.

to become so unrealistic, so flippantly superficial in all our everyday thinking and feeling about man and the world he lives in?"[5]

Frivolousness is not the only characteristic of modern society that concerns Huxley. He notes with dismay that most people still find themselves living under various forms and degrees of tyranny. This, he concludes, is the price paid for organizing our societies around highly centralized, mass political and economic institutions. On the social consequences of mass economic structures Huxley comments in a letter to E.S.P. Haynes, written on March 19, 1940:

> It certainly looks as though an age of tyranny were before us . . . it seems that existing industrial techniques and financial organizations must inevitably impose such tyranny--inasmuch as such large-scale organization produces problems too complex to solve except by 'bureaucratic planning', which always leads to more 'planning' (because any given plan is invariably inadequate to a highly complex problem), which means more and more tyranny on the part of the planners (however good their original intentions), more and more repression and regimentation in the desparate effort to simplify the problem and make the plan work.6

And on the same theme, in an earlier letter to his brother Julian he writes:

> People are so much obsessed with the old idea that mass production is the only possible method, that economists and legislators go on working out more and more elaborate (and consequently more and more dictatorial) plans for the purpose of making a centralized mass-producing industry work.7

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[5] Ibid., p. 171.

[6] AH, Letters, op. cit., p. 451.

[7] Ibid., Ap. 12, 1938, pp. 434-435. See also AH's chapter on "Decentralization and Self-Government" in Ends and Means, op. cit., pp. 70-88.

Huxley's view of modern trends in political organization is not dissimilar. For him there is a similarity between the end results of large scale political and economic endeavors in that, in most cases, both are detrimental to mankind's human status. Thus in Ends and Means he sets forth an opinion which he would hold consistently till his death:

> The particular circumstances of our time (nationalistic sentiment, economic imperialism, threats of war and so forth) conspire to create a tendency toward the concentration and centralization of authority. The consequence of this is a curtailment of individual liberties and a progressive regimentation of the masses, even in countries hitherto enjoying a democratic form of government.8

The "statistically normal" man, alienated from his spiritual self is thus seen by Huxley within a depersonalized economic and political setting. Here the pervasive mood Huxley sets is one of stark pessimism. Seeing little or no redeeming qualities in present socio-political arrangements, he becomes free to concentrate on every particular of their negative aspects. Ultimately, he sees Western society rushing headlong toward an end that can only steadily undermine the individual freedom and spontaneity that still exists. In the last thirty years the path of economic and political development toward centralization has made the production of suicidal weapons and frivolous consumer items the cornerstones of prosperity. A demand has sprung up for both and the economic

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[8] Ibid., p. 68. See also Letters, AH to Victoria Ocampo, Nov. 24, 1945, op. cit., p. 536 and again, AH, "Liberty, Quality, Machinery," in Adonis and the Alphabet, op. cit., p. 109.

goal of society is now to meet it effectively and efficiently. In the process, in Huxley's view, the individual has been slowly reduced to a state of passive "true believer" in order that he fit into the scheme of mass-organization. He noted this tendency toward such passivity as early as 1923 in an article in which he laments the fact that as both work and relaxation become more technological in nature, they require less and less mental activity.[9]

Again, Huxley is not a lone voice but one of a chorus protesting the direction modern Western society has taken in respect to the individual. Betrand Russell, a life-long acquaintance of Huxley, simultaneously warned of the modern trend toward centralization of authority at the cost of individual initiative. Likewise, he insisted on the necessity of viewing society as a means to human fulfillment.[9a] Both men were independently reacting against the style of life evolved in response to moral void bequeathed by the First World War. The basis for that response was material: mass production, mass consumption and mass politics, but the original problem was one of values. In Huxley's eyes the problem was ultimately one of the spirit. While Russell stays within the realm of non-fiction in his attempts to get

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[9]"Pleasures," in On the Margin, op. cit., pp. 45-52. See also Antic Hay, op. cit., pp. 39-40 and "Mother," op. cit., p. 177.

[9a]Bertrand Russell, Authority and the Individual (London: Unwin Books, 1949), pp. 35, 74, 87, 89.

his warnings across to layman and academics alike, Huxley uses both non-fiction and fiction. For instance, thirty-nine years after the above mentioned 1923 protest over the changing nature of work and relaxation, Huxley still expresses similar misgivings--this time in his novel Island--over the effects on the individual of the ever-increasing technological nature of things:

> What are boys and girls for in America? Answer: for mass consumption. And the corollaries of mass consumption are mass communications, mass advertising, mass opiates in the form of television, meprobamate, positive thinking, and cigarettes. And now that Europe has made the breakthrough into mass production, what will its boys and girls be for? For mass consumption and all the rest--just like the boys and girls in America.10

The result of all this is "the motorized television addicts of America and Europe."[11] The unchecked advance of technology and centralized political and economic structures have resulted in a vacuous hedonism that ultimately causes people to feel bored, lonely, fearful and powerless.[12] It is interesting to note that the psychoanalyst Erich Fromm offers a similar critique of modern society. In The Revolution of Hope he points out that the anxiety which

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[10] Op. cit., p. 201.

[11] Ibid., p. 210.

[12] Of the modern day hedonist Thorstein Veblen wrote, "He is not the seat of a process of living, except in the sense that he is subject to a series of permutations enforced upon him by circumstances external and alien to him. "Why is Economics not an Evolutionary Science?" in The Place of Science in Modern Civilization and Other Essays (N.Y.: B.W. Huebsch, 1919), p. 73.

lonliness and powerlessness render up in modern Western man are at least as threatening to him as conscious awareness and expression of sexual desires were to his Victorian grandfathers.[13]

Although it is the case that most men share in these anxieties social and economic success often requires the suppression of such feelings.[13a] This is a tendency that Huxley noted in Antic Hay where he observes that more and more people are trying harder and harder to maintain a constant busyness. This busyness is what Huxley refers to as a frantic search for happiness through "good times." If one must repress one's true emotional state in order to appear successful (and success is associated with a superficial suppression of powerlessness) the economic reward of such behavior will allow one to be an ever greater consumer of "good times." "Good times" in turn, make the efforts at repression easier.[14] Ultimately, "successful" life is reduced

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[13]Erich Fromm, The Revolution of Hope, op. cit., p. 10.

[13a]Indeed, the pressures on the individual to live up to the modern idea of the successful person are so strong as to cause Huxley to refer to success as "the bitch-goddess." Only those with a positive, seemingly unalienated attitude quickly scale the socio-economic ladder. See AH, "Spinoza's Worm," in Do What You Will (London: Watts & Co., 1936), pp. 66-67.

[14]Huxley and others consider the inevitable result of such suppression to be a crippling of the spirit. Erich Fromm, for example, has noted that modern social and economic organization often has the following effects on those intimately caught up in it: (1) Their imagination would be hobbled by their psychic pathology, they would be uncreative, their thinking

to a never-ending quest for distraction--"preferably by buying it from the manufacturers who cater for man's comfort and amusement."[15] As early as the mid-nineteenth century the poetry of Baudelaire (much admired by Huxley) caught the sense of this life-style, then still in its incohate form. He wrote, in reference to the bourgeois Parisians around him, "Tes debacuhes sans soif et tes amours sans âme."[16] Baudelaire sensed that the developing middle-class creates for itself an illusion of being fully alive. In truth, for all its material comfort and "good times," it is a life "sans ame."

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would be routinized and bureaucratic and hence they would bureaucratic, and hence they would not come up with new ideas and solutions which would contribute to a more productive development of the system; altogether their energy would be considerably lowered. (2) They would suffer from many physical ills, which are the result of stress and tension . . . . Furthermore, if one examines what this tension and anxiety do to them in their relationship to their wives and children, and their functioning as responsible citizens, it may turn out that for the system as a whole the seemingly efficient method is most inefficient not only in human terms but also as measured by merely economic criteria. The Revolution of Hope, op. cit., p. 35.

[15]AH, "The Problem of Faith," Harpers Magazine, 166 (Jan. 1933), p. 214.

[16]In his essay on "Baudelaire" Huxley writes, "We turn to poetry for the perfect expression of our own feelings. In Fleurs du Mal the modern finds all his own suffering described with what incomparable energy, in forms how memorably beautiful! 'Je suis comme le Roi d'un pays pluvieux Riche mais impuissant, jeune et pourtant très vieux! It is 'la poesie meme la modernité.'" Art and Artists, op. cit., p. 195.

To stop being busy is the worst thing the seeker after modern success can do. To be still with oneself, to, as Huxley suggests in Those Barren Leaves, ask oneself "Why am I doing this? What is it all for?" is the first step to a more human life, but it is also to invite tremendous anxiety. Huxley continues:

> Ask yourself these questions thoughtfully, seriously. Reflect even for a moment on their significance--and I can guarantee that, firmly seated though you may be in your hard or your padded chair, you will feel all at once that the void has opened beneath you, that you are sliding headlong, fast and faster, into nothingness.17

Stop the busyness and one must come to terms with one's spiritually depleted, radically separate self--an existence which, for Huxley, is hardly worthy of human beings. Under such circumstances, in his opinion, the real problem with the modern world is "not that it makes some people richer than others, but that it makes life fundamentally unlivable for all."[18]

This conclusion has important ramifications. It is, paradoxically, the "fundamentally unlivable" style of life that most of the world's population now aspires to. In the eyes of many it typifies the United States. The proverbial land of plenty, where the "good life"--the pot of gold at the end of the social-evolutionary rainbow--is found. In material terms this has some truth to it. But given Huxley's goal of

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[17] Op. cit., pp. 106-108.

[18] AH, "Revolutions," in Do What You Will, op. cit., p. 179.

well rounded "amphibiousness," American society falls far short of maintaining a human standard of living--a fact he tries to make clear in After Many A Summer. Thus, while it certainly makes sense to seek food, shelter and general comfort, it is for Huxley disastrous to create a life-style based almost exclusively on these ends. Nonetheless, "good times" and, politically speaking, making the world safe for having "good times," has become one of Western man's chief ends. In the early years of the Great Depression Huxley had briefly thought that the trauma of economic collapse would cause disenchantment with a life based merely on material success but this proved not the case.[19] The post-war world needs busyness more than ever before.

As we shall see when we come to examine Brave New World, Huxley saw great political and psychological danger in the ubiquitious passion for a life of distraction as an antidote for a life of emptiness. He realized men might come to trade freedom and individual initiative for the security inherent in a dictatorship that defines every need, supplies every want, and provides for every moment of one's time.[20] If today's society is not yet as stultifying of human potential as that of Brave New World, it is certainly not conducive to the growth of the fully aware "amphibious" man.

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[19]AH, "The Problem of Faith," Harpers, op. cit., pp. 213-216.

[20]See also AH, "The Final Revolution," in Contact, II (1959), p. 14, and AH, "Drugs that Change Men's Minds, op. cit., p. 341.

How does one break the vicious progression, avoid Brave New World, and approach "amphibious" awareness?

In Huxley's view a humanely organized society must allow for the full development of different types of personalities while making sure that potentially dangerous traits, such as the somatotonic's natural aggressiveness, are directed (not repressed) into channels that are socially and individually beneficial.[21] It is the individual with whom Huxley is concerned. Institutions, be they governmental, educational or social all must give priority to meeting the developmental needs of the unique individual rather than any ststistical social norm.[22]

Huxley's basic sympathies are libertarian,[23] and this led him to advocate radical economic and political decentralization as the only organizational approach truly conducive to "amphibiousness."[24] As we will see, similar ideas can be found coming from Bertrand Russell and others yet Huxley goes beyond his contemporaries here. Not only is his aim an increased sense of individual worth through a greater ability

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[21] AH, "Education on the Nonverbal Level," op. cit., pp. 291-292. Also, Island, op. cit., chapter nine, passim.

[22] Ibid., pp. 202-210.

[23] These sympathies are the source of Huxley's dislike for large scale planning. In a letter to E.S.P. Haynes, Mar. 19, 1940, he wrote, "All large scale plans are beds of Procrustes, to fit which the people must be stretched or surgically abbreviated." Letters, op. cit., p. 451.

[24] See Letters, AH to V. Ocampo, April 2, 1945, op. cit., p. 518, and AH, The Perennial Philosophy, op. cit., p. 11.

to imprint one's self on the world in a meaningful way, but first and foremost a spiritual invigoration. Thus he posits a direct connection between social organization and the achievable level of spiritual awareness. One gets a hint of this connection in the life-style Huxley creates for the character Mr. Propter in After Many A Summer. Here he makes manifest the notion that if men are to develop not only their full mental and physical potentials but also realize their spiritual essences they cannot be politically or economically enslaved. "I don't want any bosses," Huxley has Mr. Propter declare, "the more bosses the less democracy" in more than just a political sense.[25]

What are the roadblocks that face those who try to formulate a way out of the banality which constitutes modern life? Huxley spent much time defining and analysing them in order to better develop the practicality of such proposed reforms as political and economic decentralization, the judicious use of psychedelics, and a potential role for applied mysticism in the life of modern man. It is to a consideration of this analysis that we now turn.

I - POLITICS

For Huxley the problem of politics is the problem of man's inherent fallibility. Because men are fallible and liable to abuse the power that falls into their hands,

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[25] Op. cit., p. 132. See also pp. 130-133 and 144-145.

political participation is bound to frustrate the idealist activist. When it comes to his opinion of "mass" politics, that characteristic of the modern world, Huxley appears to be just such a frustrated idealist. He writes pessimistically in Grey Eminence:

> In unstable, unisolated, technologically progressive societies, such as ours, large-scale political action is unavoidable. But even when it is well-intentioned (which it is very often not) political action is always foredoomed to a partial, sometimes even a complete, self-stultification.26

A firm believer in Lord Acton's assertion that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely, Huxley concludes that most people, exposed long enough to powerful enough temptation (such as the temptation to abuse power) will succumb.[27] As he sees it, the wielding of large scale power, whether by an individual, an oligarchy, or "the masses" has had two disastrous consequences: it has led to one or another form of political and economic enslavement and it has led to a loss of spiritual self-awareness.

Huxley demonstrates this latter consequence in his biography of Father Joseph, the Grey Eminence. Father Joseph was a Capuchin monk with mystical leanings who, because of his belief that God's will was identical with that of the monarchy, allowed himself to become the unofficial foreign

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[26]Aldous Huxley, Grey Eminence (London: Chatto & Windus, pp. 242-243.

[27]AH, "Variations on a Philosopher," Themes and Variations (London: Chatto & Windus, 1950), p. 80. See also Island, op. cit., pp. 146-147.

> perfectly useless and perhaps even harmful to the community which tolerates it.29

Today, in Western society, there is no longer any question of mixing politics and mystical religion. In a world where action is an end in itself, the requirements of a political career are best filled by a person with a generally somatotonic temperament. The aggressive, extraverted, self-assured man tends to be the "ideal" leader and domestic and foreign policies often reflect this.[30]

Huxley came to see contemporary political practice as a function of a "higher idolatry," which he defines as "the belief in, and worship of a human creation as though it were a God."[31] There are many forms of "higher idolotry," but the modern politician's brand is characterized by the worship of political, economic or social organization. "Impose the right kind of organization on human beings, and all their problems, from sin and unhappiness to sewage disposal and war, will be automatically solved."[32] This search for

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[29] AH, The Perennial Philosophy, op. cit., p. 294.

[30] This had led Huxley to observe that our world's political relations have taken on the characteristics of those of adolescent boys. "The collective mentality of nations - the mentality which reasonable adults have to adopt, when making important decisions in the field of international politics - is that of a delinquent boy of fourteen, at once cunning and childish, malevolent and silly, maniacally egotistical, touchy and acquisitive, and at the same time ludicrously boastful and vain." Science Liberty and Peace (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1946), pp. 47-48.

[31] AH, "Idolatry," in Vedanta for the Western World (A Viking Compass Book, N.Y.: Viking Press, 1971), p. 427.

[32] Ibid., p. 429. See also Proper Studies, op. cit., p. 213, The Perennial Philosophy, op. cit., pp. 251-252, and Ends and Means, op. cit., p. 97.

the perfect form of social organization has, Huxley feels, allowed 20th century European and American political leaders to commit in good conscience any number of crimes, just as the identification of God and the French monarchy acted as an open ended rationalization for Father Joseph's 17th century machinations.

Frustrated by the abuse of political position, Huxley tried to come to grips with the problem of control of power. "Social, political and economic reforms," he reasoned, can at best accomplish "the removal of certain temptations, to which individuals are all too apt to yield--with disastrous results for themselves and others."[33] If the reforms were to be effective and the removal of temptations long lasting, however, they had to be accompanied by a change in attitude in specific areas of human behavior: behavior between men and men and behavior between men and nature. These changes in attitude ultimately constitute for Huxley prerequisites to the realization of political, social and economic institutions suitable for "amphibious" personality development. He notes the following:

(1) To limit the threat of war and correct the misappropriation of resources, people must recognize that power politics and nation-worship are pursuits in which they can no longer afford to indulge. The difficulty in realizing this

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[33]AH, Themes & Variations, op. cit., p. 80.

change in attitude can better be appreciated when one realizes that nationalism produces an emotional environment which allows men to vicariously satisfy their own lust for power and domination through the activities of the state.[34] To Huxley, this is incompatible with spiritual awareness and perverts psycho-physical development by submerging the individual in an anxiety-ridden, hate-producing atmosphere.

(2) There must be a reconsideration of the conditions which constitute truly human progress--that is, "amphibious" progress. Men must stop identifying the material results of a never-ending cycle of mass-production and mass-consumption with a fulfilling world. We have seen how this attitude contributes to a basically anti-human concept of normalcy which, for Huxley, represents an eclipse of the spiritual dimension.[35] It also leads to an equally negative attitude toward the natural environment.

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[34] AH, The Perennial Philosophy, op. cit., p. 122. See also The Devils of Loudun (N.Y.: Harper & Bros., 1952), p. 318 and Ends and Means, op. cit., p. 97. In an essay, "Words and Behavior" Huxley offers the following observation on the psychological relationship between nation and individual, "The personified entity [the nation-state] is a being, not only great and noble, but also insanely proud, vain and touchy; fiercely rapacious; a braggart; bound by no considerations of right and wrong . . . . Identifying themselves with this god, individuals find relief from the constraints of ordinary social decency, feel themselves justified in giving rein, within duly perscribed limits, to their criminal provlicities. As a loyal nationalist or party-man, one can enjoy the luxury of behaving badly with a good conscience," The Olive Tree (London: Chatto & Windus, 1947), p. 97.

[35] In Time Must Have a Stop, op. cit., pp. 138-143, 156-160 and 261-267, Huxley uses his fiction as a vehicle to demonstrate the negative effects of an obsession with material pleasures on one's spiritual dimension.

(3) There must be an awareness of the planet's delicate ecological balance and a realization that man cannot treat animate or inanimate things as mere "things" any longer.[36] Huxley demonstrated an awareness of the need for such a change in attitude as early as 1928.[37] In 1946 he tried to bring his concern over ecology to the public when he wrote a short work titled Science, Liberty and Peace. In it he complained that men treat nature with hubris--that we "behave as though we were not members of the earth's ecological community."[38]

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[36] In The Politics of Ecology Huxley writes, "Animals have no souls; therefore according to the most authoritative Christian theologians, they may be treated as though they were things. The truth, as we are now beginning to realize, is that even things ought not to be treated as mere things. They should be treated as though they were parts of a vast living organism. 'Do as you would be done by.' The Golden Rule applies to our dealings with nature no less than our dealings with our fellow men." (Santa Barbara, Calif.: The Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, 1963), p. 6.

[37] Huxley takes up the problem of ecology in a passage in Point Counter Point. Early in the novel he has the millionaire scientist, Lord Edward, render up an impassioned lecture to the right wing politician Everard Webley:

> "Progress! You politicians are always talking about it. As though it were going to last. Indefinitely. More motors, more babies, more food, more advertising, more money, more everything, forever. You ought to take a few lessons in my subject, physical biology. Progress, indeed! What do you propose to do about phosphorus, for example?
> "Phosphorus, coal, petroleum, nitre--squander them all. . . .
> "The only result of your progress will be that in a few generations there'll be a real revolution--a natural, cosmic revolution. Your upsetting the equilibrium. And in the end, nature will restore it. And the process will be very uncomfortable for you." op. cit., pp. 57-8.

[38] Aldous Huxley, Science, Liberty and Peace (N.Y.: Harper & Bros., 1946), p. 6. See also Letters, AH to F. Osborn, Jan. 16, 1948, op. cit., pp. 578-9.

He asks that man heed the warning that such near-sighted behavior is always followed by an avenging nemisis. Huxley described the potential character of this nemisis in 1950 when he observed that there was an intimate relationship between political deterioration into coercive and aggressive dictatorship and unchecked population growth, inadequate food production and callous ecological destruction. Referring to the ecology, he wrote:

> If, presumptuously, imagining that we can 'conquer' nature, we continue to live on our planet like a swarm of destructive parasites--we condemn ourselves and our children to misery and deepening squalor and the despair that finds expression in the frenzies of collective violence.39

Shortly before his death in 1963, he once more turned his attention to this relationship in a paper written for the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara. Here he suggests that,

> Power politics, nationalism, and dogmatic ideology are luxuries that the human race can no longer afford. Nor, as a species, can we afford the luxury of ignoring man's ecological situation. By shifting our attention from the now completely irrelevant and anachronistic politics of nationalism and military power to the problems of the human species and still more inchoate politics of human ecology we shall be killing two birds with one stone--reducing the treat of sudden destruction by scientific war and at the same time reducing the treat of more gradual biological disaster.40

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[39] Aldous Huxley, "The Double Crisis" in Themes and Variations, op. cit., p. 260. See also Bedford, II, op. cit., pp. 82-3, 90-1.

[40] Politics of Ecology, op. cit., pp. 6-7. See also Huxley's Forward in S.P.R. Charter, Man on Earth (N.Y.: Grove Press, 1962), passim.

These papers and articles were efforts to arouse interest in a problem of world-wide significance. As with his political writings, however, Huxley knew they would not bring any quick or widespread enlightenment. Making reference to his efforts on behalf of ecological reform, he once commented, "in view of what politicians and the voting public are like, hope must always be mingled with a great deal of doubt."[41] He was right. General recognition that man's natural relationship with nature had been allowed to deteriorate into a parasitic one did not occur until some years after his death. Huxley's far-sighted warnings had little to do with present awareness of ecological problems; even today his comments are little known to ecologists and all but unknown to the general public. It was, no doubt, the impending economic effects of depleted resources that encouraged many countries to take action in this area. Whatever their reasons, Huxley's motives are clear--in the long run, ecological mismanagament can only result in severe resource shortages, domestic unrest and the intensification of international power struggles. Furthermore, no "amphibious" self-realization is possible where there is increased political and economic control of the individual to which scarcity and over-population will almost surely lead.

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[41] Letters, AH to F. Osborn, Jan 16, 1948, op. cit., p. 578.

(4) Man must learn to speak of politics and war in realistic terms rather than in abstract terminology that depersonalizes the individual. For example, individuals should not be lumped together in terms of closed ideological or racial groups such as "capitalists" "Arabs" or "Jews." Furthermore, it is dangerous to speak of people as do military strategists, as in the case of the "left-flank" of one army advancing against the "right flank" of another. When Mr. Brown or Mr. Jones are transformed into this "commie" or that "Yid" they "cease to be conceived of as what they really are--human beings--and become for the users of this fatally inappropriate language mere vermin or, worse, demons whom it is right and proper to destroy as thoroughly and as painfully as possible."[42] In the same manner it is much easier for those who command armies to send hundreds of thousands of people to their deaths when they can be seen not as individuals but rather as brigades and divisions. Huxley concludes that:

> Politics can become moral only on one condition: that its problems shall be spoken of and thought about exclusively in terms of concrete reality; that is to say, of persons. To depersonify human beings and to personify abstractions are complimentary errors which lead, by an inexorable logic, to war between nations and to idolatrous worship of the state, with consequent governmental oppression.[43]

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[42] AH, "Words and Behavior," op. cit., p. 98. See also Devils of Loudon op. cit., pp. 300-301.

[43] "Words and Behavior," op. cit., p. 99.

Thinking correctly becomes a prerequisite to behaving correctly. The consistent use of appropriate terms in relation to man and his interrelationships takes on the force of a moral act.[44]

(5) Finally, and most crucially, people must come to the realization that there is a great need for political and economic decentralization as a first step in any rejuvenation of democratic self-government. Huxley's attitude toward decentralization is, once again, a function of how he views the direction of political and economic developments. The rise in population, the maturation of technology and the increasing strength of nationalism was leading, he believed, straight to the totalitarian phenomenon and world war. This opinion, which Huxley held by the late 1920's, marked many of the more sensitive, cosmopolitan thinkers of his generation. One can turn once more, to his contemporary Bertrand Russell and see an almost parallel reaction (that is, in respect to decentralization) to modern trends. Russell looked to a world government to prevent war but in most other areas of human endeavor he warned of the need for a devolution of the state's power into the hands of local communities or "various kinds of bodies--geographical, industrial, cultural, according to their functions."[45] Huxley's

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[44] Ibid., p. 100.

[45] Bertrand Russell, Authority and the Individual, op. cit., p. 74. Huxley pictures a similar arrangement in his novel, Island.

attitude toward the idea of a world government, even fairly restricted in purpose is not known, but would most likely have been a sceptical one. His opinion as to how to best "humanize" politics, however, is not too dissimilar from Russell's. In Ends and Means Huxley states unequivocally, "The political road to a better society . . . is the road of decentralization and responsible self-government."[46] This same attitude is expressed in many of his letters. For example, in a letter to Victoria Ocampo dated November 24, 1945 he writes:

> Either you choose . . . to be a totalitarian facist, aiming at 'le socialisme fasciste'--and you find yourself immediately involved in the most atrocious military tyranny. Or you choose socialism or communism, call the resulting totalitarianism by the name of 'democracy' and end up, if you are sensitive and honest, by finding yourself horribly disillusioned. Or finally you cling to democratic capitalism and find yourself forced, by the logic of advancing technology, to embrace some form of totalitarianism. There is no way out along any of these lines. The only issue, as far as I can see, is in the direction of decentralism and distributism--the dispersion of property in land and means of production among the greatest possible number of individuals and the encouragement of free co-operative enterprise and self-government.47

Huxley realized that men require a certain degree of institutional organization. However, institutions must be arranged so as to "put fences round quarries,"[48] that is they

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[46] Ends and Means, op. cit., p. 63.

[47] Letters, op. cit., p. 536. See also Letters, AH to Julian Huxley, April 12, 1938, Ibid., pp. 434-435 and Letters, AH to Julian Huxley, October 27, 1946, Ibid., p. 554.

[48] Aldous Huxley, "Grace, Predestination and Salvation," in Hibbert Journal, 29 (January, 1931, p. 198).

must eliminate, as far as possible, the opportunities for the misuse of political and economic power. Here decentralization is of the greatest importance because:

> The quality of moral behaviour varies in inverse ratio to the number of human beings involved. Individuals and small groups do not always and automatically behave well. But at least they can be moral and rational to a degree unattainable by large groups. For, as numbers increase, personal relations between members of the group, and between its members and those of other groups, become more difficult, and finally, for the vast majority of the individuals concerned, impossible. Imagination has to take the place of direct acquaintance, behaviour motivated by a reasoned and impersonal benevolence, the place of behaviour motivated by personal affection and a spontaneous and unreflecting compassion. But in most men and women reason, sympathetic imagination and the impersonal view of things are very slightly developed. That is why, among other reasons, ethical standards prevailing within large groups, between large groups, and between the rulers and the ruled in a large group, are generally lower than those prevailing within and among small groups.49

Given these circumstances, Huxley was convinced that political and economic decentralization provided the most propitious environment in which to achieve individual self-awareness.[50] What is important to him here is flexibility

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[49]AH, Grey Eminence, op. cit., pp. 247-248. See also, The Perennial Philosophy, op. cit., pp. 95-96.

[50]This opinion comes out strongly in certain of Huxley's works of fiction. See After Many A Summer, op. cit., pp. 130-134 and p. 148, and Island, op. cit., chapter nine, passim. See also Letters, AH to Julian Huxley, Dec. 15, 1940, op. cit., p. 464.

Huxley feels that a decentralized community environment is especially propitious to the development of a greater awareness of one's spiritual dimension. On April 2, 1945 he wrote to Victoria Ocampo, "Between totalitarian facism and totalitarian socialism lies the alternative of decentralism and co-operative enterprise--which constitutes the economic-political system most natural to spirituality." Letters, op. cit., p. 518.

and self-sufficiency: flexibility necessary for full personality development and the economic self-sufficiency that frees one from the fear of poverty. He thought that these qualities were best found in small group organization--the relegation of activities to a politically, economically and socially human scale.[51]

When Huxley explains the particulars of his concept of decentralization he reads like a combination of Fourier, the early Karl Marx and Ralph Waldo Emerson. For example, he writes that in order for decentralization to work people must have access to "enough land and possess sufficient tools, and professional skill to be able to provide for their subsistence without recourse to financially potent private capitalists or the government."[52] If people become dependent on such institutions as the banks or the government they lose control of their economic lives. Thus, for Huxley, "dependence upon bosses is always bad."[53] Therefore, he suggests that the means of production should be cooperatively owned and the community organized in "groups of mutually

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[51] In this opinion he was influenced by the community self-help work of Ralph Borsodi. See Letters, AH to Julian Huxley, April 12, 1938, op. cit., p. 434.

[52] AH, Science, Liberty and Peace, op. cit., p. 15. See also Letters, AH to Julian Huxley, Dec., 15, 1940, p. 464.

[53] Science, Liberty and Peace, op. cit., p. 15. See also After Many a Summer, op. cit., p. 132. Huxley himself was spared any dependence on bosses for much of his life due to his ability to make his living as an author and freelance writer.

responsible men and women."[54] And finally, he subscribes to the Emersonian doctrine of self-reliance, adapting it to the needs of the 20th century.[55]

Decentralization is presented as a means to Huxley's end of a world fit for truly human development. It must be realized, however, that he does not know, nor does he profess to know, how to bring about the general public acceptance of this program.[56] He recognizes that the humanization of politics and economics will likely come only with a slow transformation of consciousness,[57] aided by enlightened men and women working on the periphery of society (as he himself

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[54]AH, Ends and Means, op. cit., p. 169. There is no doubt that, given the correct use of technology, Huxley felt decentralization was economically feasible. See Letters, AH to Julian Huxley, Dec. 15, 1940, op. cit., p. 464. Also AH's Introduction to J.D. Unwin, Hopousia (London: Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1940), p. 23.

[55]AH, Science, Liberty and Peace, op. cit., pp. 56-57.

[56]Sybille Bedford, Huxley's biographer, writes that "Aldous's tentative solutions for our various dilemmas were psychological solutions chiefly, and addressed to the fairly exceptional individual, to l'ame bien née, in fact." Aldous Huxley, A Biography, I, op. cit., p. 219. One does suspect, however, that he wished for a larger audience for he sought to publish not only in scholarly journals but also in popular magazines such as Life and Esquire. On this point see Humphry Osmond, Understanding Understanding (N.Y.: Bantam, 1974), p. 105.

[57]It is a change in consciousness that must ultimately cause a change in societies' institutional arrangments. For Huxley, how we use our institutions is a function of our notions of right and wrong and these, in turn, are a function of our beliefs about the ultimate nature of reality. The slow transformation has to move in the direction of a saner and more accurate understanding of reality. See Ends and Means, op. cit., p. 10.

did) rather than from any central position of power.[58] His faith in the work of such individuals and their positive effect on small groups of good-willed people grew with time, while his pessimism regarding the future of the "masses" with their weakness for messianic leaders, increased.[59]

Decentralization also has potential spiritual benefits. By placing "fences" around the "quarries" of corruption and exploitation--that is by the greatest dispersion of power and responsibility--an environment is provided in which those in administrative positions may be better relied upon to carry out what Huxley sees as their real job, the maintenance of an environment containing the least number of roadblocks to the "disinterested love of God, Nature and man."[60]

Taken altogether then, the reforms we have thus far seen Huxley advocate would allow politicians and organizers to stop devoting their energies to counter-productive pursuits such as nationalism, imperialism and war. They could

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[58] See Letters, AH to Julian Huxley, Mar. 13, 1941, op. cit., pp. 464-465.

[59] See Letters, AH to Eva Herrmann, Aug., 1, 1939, op. cit., p. 445. Huxley's pessimism over mass societies and organizations was intensified by what he saw as the inevitable consequences of world over-population. In his essay, "the Double Crisis" he writes, "It is no accident that the twentieth century should be the century of highly centralized governments and totalitarian dictatorships; it had to be so for the simple reason that the twentieth century is the century of planetary overcrowing. Themes & Variations, op. cit., pp. 235-6.

[60] AH, The Perennial Philosophy, op. cit., pp. 93-95.

then start to work for the ecological survival of the species, and the realization of well-rounded amphibiousness in the largest number of individuals possible. This is what Huxley would call good and sensible politics.[61] When we come to examine Huxley's positive utopia, Island, we will see his vision of a "decentralized community" bolstered by various humanistic reforms.

The real world, however, is not decentralizing. Instead, it seems solidly committed to what Huxley would deem bad and irresponsible politics. Of what does "bad politics" consist and what is the threat it presents to man's achievement of a human status?

II - NATIONALISM--THE ABUSE OF LANGUAGE

> To cultivate the religion of idolatrous nationalism, to subordinate the interests of the species and its individual members to the interests of a single national state and its ruling minority--in the context of the population expansion, missiles, and atomic warheads, this is bad and thoroughly unrealistic politics. Unfortunately, it is to bad and unrealistic politics that our rulers are now committed.62

A major impediment to the realization of Huxley's humane world, and the "good politics" that must accompany it, is nationalism: the modern world's replacement for the waning orthodox religions. He made this observation as early

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[61] AH, The Politics of Ecology, op. cit., p. 6.

[62] Ibid.

as 1927 when he wrote:

> Perhaps the most important substitute for religion is politics. Extreme nationalism presents its devotees with a god to be worshipped--the country--together with much inspiring ritual of a mainly military kind.63

Huxley points out that while this new god is superficially divine in size and power, it must be seen as sub-human in regard to moral behavior.[64] Nationalist passions become, when instituted as national policy, something more diabolical. Here Huxley has something in common with the political analysis of the French existentialist Albert Camus. Camus felt that men had realized that God does not exist and that there are no divinely posited values. Thus men become the sole source of their own values and perhaps also begin to try to act like their old gods, bound by no code of human ethics. Ends come to justify means and nihilism or totalitarianism results. For Huxley, nationalism is the modern vehicle through which men have tried to act like gods. In the process, national programs are transformed into the

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[63] Proper Studies, op. cit., p. 213. Nine years later in an essay "Modern Fetishism" he expressed the notion in a slightly different way, "Nor, of course, has the cult of public fetishes and avowable relics altogether disappeared; it has merely moved away from the churches and established itself elsewhere. Thus the flag has taken the place, as a cult object, of the cross; and in the icon corner one sees the image, not of a saint, but of the local dictator or a favourite political author." Olive Tree, op. cit., p. 102. See also Ends and Means, op. cit., p. 97.

[64] Ibid., pp. 97-98, See also AH, Science, Liberty and Peace, op. cit., pp. 47-48.

actions of Behmoth; and as the nation's behavior becomes more sub-human, so does that of its individual citizens:

> The exemplary citizen can indulge in vicarious criminality not only in the films, but also in the field of international relations. The divine nation of whom he is mystically a part bullies and cheats, blusters and threatens in a way which many people find profoundly satisfying to their sedulously repressed lower natures.65

The old religious-political allegiences which motivated the Crusades and the violence of the reformation no longer have much power to move contemporary man. Huxley notes, however, that while motivating beliefs might alter with time, the result has remained the same:

> The notions we take too seriously are not the same as those which drove our fathers into their maniacal aberrations. But, though the causes differ, the results, at least on the collective level, are identical. Their unrealistic theories of man's nature and the nature of the world made it mandatory for them to bully, persecute and kill--always in the name of God. We too kill, persecute and bully, but . . . our collective paronia is organized in the name of the idolatrously worshipped Nation or the Divine Party. The misused notions, the overvalued words and phrases are new; but the resultant slaughters and oppressions are dismally familiar.66

Huxley, like Camus, had an abhorrence of fanaticism and he thought he saw a striking similarity between the

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65 Ends and Means, op. cit., p. 98. See also "Variations on a Philosopher," in Themes and Variations, op. cit., p. 38; "Writers and Readers," in Olive Tree, op. cit., p. 15; Devils of Loudun, op. cit., p. 301; and finally see Perennial Philosophy op. cit., p. 122 where he writes:

> The little man can satisfy his lust for power vicariously through the activities of the imperialistic state, just as the big man does; the difference between them is one of degree, not of kind.

66 Aldous Huxley, Literature and Science (London: Chatto & Windus, 1963), p. 78.

zealous self-assurance of the dogmatic religious and dogmatic nationalist believer. Individuals concerned with the mundane matters of everyday living might make mistakes, but the "true believer," the advocate of national causes, fortified by his ideology, claims infallibility. It is as though political institutionalization makes a people incapable of error.[67] Thus, Huxley observes, for nationalists the success of state policies in charuvinstic international adventures is,

> Sufficient proof of their [the nationalists] intellectual and moral superiority. They therefore exalt the qualities which made for their own success, setting them up as a standard of absolute excellence. [Those] with different qualities, particularly if they happen not to be very successful at the moment, are regarded as lower races.68

Here he thinks he has found a primary source of international friction. In order to preserve the myth that the state, as the emobidment of "the people" is infallible, the dogmatic supporters of the deified nation must promote international hatreds. In effect, the nation must establish

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[67]For a good modern exposition on the consequences of this tendency see Hannah Arendt, "Lying in Politics," in Crisis of the Republic (N.Y.: Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch, 1972).

[68]AH, "The Importance of Being Nordic," in Essays Old and New (N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1968), p. 241. Setting the behavior of nations in a lighter but still apt vain, Huxley comments "Among the sixteen hundred-odd ladies whose names were set down in the catalogue of Don Giovanni's conquests, there were doubtless not a few whose favours made it necessary for the hero to consult his physician. But pox or no pox, the mere fact that the favours had been given was a thing to feel proud of. . . . The history of the nations is written in the same spirit. Grey Eminence, op. cit., p. 236.

artificial hatreds[69] on ideological or racial grounds to justify and rationalize what Huxley clearly considers its own criminality. It is, in part, to this end that propagandists of all political shades use emotional verbiage that depersonify those not of the nation or favored party.[70]

The effects of this deification of the nation on the individual citizen's perception of the nature of his world is catastrophic. Existence becomes a constant, dangerous competition between alien and mutually exclusive nationalities. As Huxley warned, it is in light of our beliefs about the nature of reality that we formulate our notions of right and wrong--and it is on the basis of our ideas of right and wrong that we frame our conduct.[71] Thus, being faithful to the religion of the divine nation-state allows for the cold-blooded execution of actions which a person not bolstered by such

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[69]Thus, Huxley notes in an essay titled "Do We Require Orgies?" "All enemies, except those fighting for the strictly limited food supply of a given territory, may be described as artificial. . . . Nationalism is the justificatory philosophy of unnecessary and artificial hatred. Under its influence, and in the absence of natural enemies, men will go out of their way to create artificial ones, so as to have an object on, which to vent their hatred." Yale Review, 23 (Mar. 1934), p. 471.

[70]Huxley observes in "Words and Behavior" that"the propagandists purpose is to make one set of people forget that certain other sets of people are human. By robbing them of their personality, he puts them outside the pale of moral obligation. Mere symbols can have no rights - particularly when that of which they are symbolical is, by definition evil." The Olive Tree, op. cit., p. 99. A fictional rendition of the effects of such propaganda can, of course, be found in George Orwell's 1984.

[71]AH. Ends and Means, op. cit., p. 10.

psuedo-religious convictions could only otherwise do in the heat of passion.[72]

Yet there are the compensating factors of the paternalitstic, home-like security that the nation-state and its ideology supply. Patriotism and gingoism seem to give purpose to life. This path to emotional security, however, produces not the mystic or the free-thinker, but the true-believer. Huxley has given this group the name, "New Stupid." There has arisen, he says in his essay "Do We Require Orgies?":

> an immense class of what I may call the New Stupid, hundering for certainty, yet unable to find it in the traditional myths and their rationalizations. So urgent has been this need for certainty that in place of the dogmas of religion they have accepted (with what passionate gratitude!) the pseudo-religious dogmas of nationalism.73

The incapacity of the New Stupid" to see that their lives were largely shaped by one set of propagandistic symbol-response patterns or another was, no doubt, an extremely frustrating fact to that distinct minority of self-aware

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[72]See AH, "Writers and Readers," in The Olive Tree, op. cit., p. 15 and AH, Science, Literature and Peace, op. cit., pp. 43-44.

[73]Yale Review, 23 (March, 1934), p. 475. The new myths have one big advantage over the old--Huxley continues, "[Nationalisms] are more obviously false and mischievous than the dogmas of religion; but they possess, for the New Stupid, the enormous merit of being concerned not with invisible but with visible entities. Nationalism is not the theory of a God whom nobody has seen. It is the theory of some actual country and its flesh and blood inhabitants." Ibid., pp. 475-6. The dogmas of the "New Stupid" appear to them as immediately real and self-evident.

intellectuals who came to intellectual maturity during and just after the First World War. Having managed to free themselves from the popular frame of reference Huxley and men like Russell and Camus had to face the likely fact that, except in times of extreme stress, men were remarkably static political animals who first seek security in a world of constant flux.[74] Though not an existentialist in the full sense of the word, Huxley understood the frightening implications of Camus's concept of the absurd. Most men can not live in a world devoid of values yet have not found the strength to posit their own. This strength, Huxley would assert, can only be positively acquired through coming to full "amphibious" self-awareness. Lacking this awareness, the majority persist, out of a kind of emotional self-defense, to act in accord with their well worn cultural frames of reference.

This clinging to the security inherent in familiar ways of perception, as narrowing and sometimes contradictory as they might seem, helped explain for Huxley many strange paradoxes. For example, in 1963 he notes that:

> Most human beings prefer peace to war, and practically all of them would rather be alive than dead. But in every part of the world men and women have been brought

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[74] It is this insight that led Huxley to advise against a very public, eye-catching approach to publicity on psychedelics in the late 1950's. There was simply no positive place for such powerful mind-altering agents within the frame of reference of most Western peoples. See above, p. 58.

> up to regard nationalism as axiomatic and war between nations as something cosmically ordained by the Nature of Things.75

An understanding of such paradoxes does not necessitate their acceptance. For the few, however, who have risen above the ubiquitous cultural fences, insight into these apparent contradictions is extremely frustrating.

Throughout his adult life Huxley felt the frustration of adhering to values different from those imposed by his society's standard frame of reference. This frustration became particularly acute in the early and mid-nineteen thirties when he advocated a pacific approach to human affairs in the midst of growing war fever. He expressed his alienation not only in the use of such derogatory terms as the "New Stupid" but also by his disparagement of the world "peace" conferences of the day[76] and the conclusion that it was futile to expect positive change from the world's leading oligarchies, for they are even more the prisoners of the accepted frame of political reference than the man in the street:

> As for the world's ruling minorities, by the very fact of their power they are chained even more

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[75] AH, The Politics of Ecology, op. cit., p. 4.

[76] "What is the use of a Disarmament or World Economic Conference so long as the people of each nation are deliberately encouraged by their leaders to indulge in orgies of group solidarity based on, and combined with, self-congradulation and contemptuous hatred for foreigners? Our need is rather for a World Psychological Conference" AH, "De We Require Orgies?" Yale Review, op. cit., p. 460.

> closely to the current system of ideas and the prevailing political customs; for this reason they are even less capable than their subjects of expressing the simple human preference for life and peace.77

It is at this point that Huxley begins to raise serious questions concerning those instruments by which so much of our frame of reference is shaped--that is the use and abuse of language and symbol. It is with these tools that man spells out the dimensions of his perceptions, causes them to be amended and transmits them to his young. As such they constitute tremendously potent elements of each individual's life, capable of leading to very positive, and also very negative forms of behavior.

Huxley was sympathetic with the logical positivist's attitude toward language. The rigorous analysis of words, especially those emotion-filled terms which lend themselves so easily to dogma and ideology, was necessary to counterbalance the ill-effects of increasingly effective propaganda techniques. Thus he suggests:

> Words are at once indispensable and fatal. Treated as working hypotheses, propositions about the world are instruments, by means of which we are enabled progressively to understand the world. Treated as absolute truths, as dogmas to be swallowed, as idols to be worshipped, propositions about the world destroy our vision of reality and lead us into all kinds of inappropriate behaviour.78

In other words, those who, with total and uncritical faith,

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[77]AH, The Politics of Ecology, op. cit., p. 4.

[78]AH, Devils of Loudun, op. cit., pp. 300-301.

accept their cultures and the verbally enunciated or symbolically expressed values upon which they are based are apt to arrive at a point where, under certain curcumstances, key words, and not reality, define perception. To quote Huxley again, there is a danger that,

> each unique event of their ongoing life is instantly and automatically classified as yet another concrete illustration of one of the verbalized, cultured-hallowed abstractions drummed into their heads by childhood conditioning.79

How easy it is then for words to take on an emotional importance that distorts rather than clearly defines the object or situation to which they are suppose to correspond.

In national politics this becomes a dangerous trend. Here language can be irresponsibly used to depersonify an enemy or group deemed socially or politically undesirable. This process of linguistically reshaping our reality Huxley termed variously: "herd-poisoning," "herd-intoxication," or "crowd-delirium."[80]

Not every gathering of people constitutes what Huxley would call a herd--that is, an easily manipulated crowd. We can say, however, that in his opinion every large gathering is a potential herd[81] and the chances of it becoming

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[79]AH, "Culture and the Individual," in Solomon, op. cit., p. 39. For Huxley's suggestion as to what writers can do to combat this abuse of language see Letters, AH to Naomi Mitchison, April 5, 1953, op. cit., pp. 667-8.

[80]AH, "History of Tension," in Scientific Monthly, LXXXV (July 1957), pp. 7-8. See also, Devils of Loudun, op. cit., pp. 315-316.

[81]"History of Tension," op. cit., p. 7.

so are proportionate to its size.[82] It is upon large and, therefore, perhaps emotionally prone groups, that words and phrases can be best used, not for rational argument based on facts, but for getting "directly at the solar plexus . . . and affecting the subconscious."[83] Take a large group of discontented or adoring minds, those who "accept the propagandist's theology or political theory, because it apparently justifies and explains the sentiments and desires evoked in them by circumstances,"[84] pack them by the hundreds or the thousands into a stadium, turn on the marital music and the subsonic sound machines pouring out vibrations at the "soul-stirring" rate of 14 cycles per second, and you have a fertile environment for the hypnotic voice of a leader like Hitler. That voice can use value-loaded words and symbols to induce such a "herd to act in ways that, as individuals or smaller groups, they would probably be reluctant to act." For the group or crowd qua herd it is the words and the symbols themselves which define reality

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[82] See Footnote 80 above.

[83] AH, "Final Revolution," Contact 2 (1959), p. 13. Also on this point Bertrand Russell has said, "Amid the myths and hysterias of opposing hatreds it is difficult to cause truth to reach the bulk of the people, or to spread the habit of forming opinions on evidence rather than passion. Yet it is ultimately upon these things, not upon any panacea, that the hopes of the world must rest." Quoted in Noam Chomsky, Problems of Freedom and Knowledge, The Russell Lecturers (N.Y.: Pantheon Books, 1971), p. 57.

[84] AH, "Writers and Readers," in The Olive Tree, op. cit., p. 15.

and they need have very little to do with that which objectively is.

The relatively large degree to which "crowd-delirium" has been accepted by societies as being legitimate in contrast to other means of intoxication is considered by Huxley to be paradoxical:

> In most civilized communities public opinion condemns debauchery and drug addiction as being ethically wrong. And to moral disapproval is added fiscal discouragement and legel repression. Alcohol is heavily taxed, the sale of narcotics is everywhere prohibited and certain sexual practices are treated as crimes. But when we pass from drugtaking and elementary sexuality to the third main avenue of downward self-transcendence, we find, on the part of the moralists and legislators, a very different and much more indulgent atitutde. This seems all the more surprising since crowd-delirium, as we may call it is more immediately dangerous to the social order, more dramtically a menace to that crust of decency, reasonableness and mutual tolerance which constitutes a civilization, than either drink or debauchery.[85]

The explanation for this he sees in the fact that:

> In all cases where it can be made to serve the interests of men controlling Church and state, downward self-transcendence by means of herd-intoxication is treated as something legitimate, and even highly desirable. . . . The fact that most of those who take part in these affairs are temporarily dehumanized by herd-poison is of no account in comparison with the fact that their dehumanization may be used to consolidate the religious and political powers that be.[86]

It should be emphasized that, in making this observation, Huxley is not suggesting the curtailment of freedom of speech or assembly. Such restrictions would be contradictory

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[85] AH, The Devils of Loudun, op. cit., pp. 315-316.

[86] Ibid., p. 318.

to the need for an environment suited to full amphibious personality development. Rather, learning to perceive and speak in more realistic terms will enhance the humane use of these freedoms.

In Huxley's mind nationalism, the abuse of language, and herd-intoxication are all interconnected. The former feeds upon the latter resulting in a dangerous mixture the consequences of which have often proved the essential truth of Thomas DeQuincey's observation:

> I content that, such as is the God of every people, such, in the corresponding features of character, will be that people. If the god (like Moloch) is fierce, the people will be cruel.87

Cast in the role of a god, the nation-state has acted more like Mars than Concordia; its worshippers in turn become cruel, full of hate, and willingness to go to war. It is true that, apart from any identification with race or nation, or the influence of ideological conditioning these traits may be found in the individual (the more general question as to whether or not man's aggressiveness is innate or instinctual will be taken up later). There is little doubt, however, that it took modern nationalism, and the historically parallel maturation of science and technology, to so potently institutionalize man's negative emotions and to threaten his very survival.

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[87]DeQuincey, "On Christianity as an Organ of Political Movement," in Collected Writings, op. cit., p. 228.

It is this parallel development that prompted Huxley, in 1933, to make the following prophetic observation:

> To-day men are faced with a perfectly simple choice: either the abandonment of the nationalist faith in its present form or its retention, with the risk, almost the certainty, of a war that may destroy our civilization.88

Applied science and technology thus constitute an added, potentially fatal, dimension to the power of the modern state and nationalism.

III - SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

For Huxley's generation nothing effected the world so decisively as did the development of science and technology. The first half of the 20th century, a period which takes in most of Huxley's life, was a time of revolutionary industrial achievement. Science had literally transformed the character of Western life.

Most men initially judged the effects of this revolution to be almost totally positive. Science would free men from alienating labor and unlock natures secrets--laying reality bare. This confidence in science's ability to explain reality and technology's capacity to meet all men's needs inevitably led to the general feeling that other modes of knowledge, for instance religion, were anachronistic.

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88 AH, "The Problem of Faith," Harpers Magazine, op. cit., p. 213. See also, AH, "Forward" to S.P.R. Charter, Man on Earth (N.Y.: Grove Press, 1962), p. XX.

The young Huxley, coming from a secular and scientific background, also looked upon religion and metaphysics sceptically. However, unlike many of his fellows, his faith in science was far from complete. While most of the public gratefully accepted television, X-rays, atomic power and the like, Huxley and some others like Bergson, sensed that the new scientific theories concerning matter, time and space would only eventually lead men back to the same basic "metaphysical" questions.

Thus, for Huxley's and succeeding generations science had an effect on two levels. It led to an undercutting of the old orthodox Western religions and, for a few including Huxley, a turning to a more mystical orientation that, in some ways, was actually encouraged by developments in quantum physics and relativity. On the other hand, it caused many more men to see "the good life" mostly in terms of an ultimately destructive and wasteful materialism. With this negative aspect of the 20th century's scientific revolution Huxley was greatly concerned. He knew that the sense of achievement it brought was in many ways dangerously misleading and false:

> We are living now, not in the delicious intoxication induced by the early successes of science, but in a rather grisly morning-after, when it has become apparent that what triumphant science has done hitherto is to improve the means for achieving unimproved or actually deteriorated ends.[89]

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[89] Ah, Ends and Means, op. cit., p. 310.

Science and technology are both tools that may be used as means to any number of ends, and it is in the light of the ends to which they are put that their potential for good or evil becomes manifest.[90]

> It rests with us and our descendents to decide whether we shall use the unprecedented power which science gives us for good or for bad purposes. It is in our hands to choose wisely or unwisely. Alas, that wisdom should be so much harder to come by than knowledge!91

Huxley had no doubts concerning the humane potentials of applied sceince. He often said that he liked labor-saving devices because they provided him with more leisure to cultivate the mind and the spirit.[92] In the negative potentials, however, he saw the greatest and most revolutionary threat to the human species.[93] Specifically, he feared the possibility of an all pervasive, technologically fortified tyranny,[94] one in which man would be induced to give up his liberties

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[90]Huxley tries to demonstrate this fact clearly in Island. The Palanese use science and technology to achieve something close to terrestrial beatitude. Col. Diap, on the other hand, uses them towards the ends of efficient dictatorial rule and war.

[91]AH, "Economists, Scientists, and Humanists," in Mary Adams, ed., Science in the Changing World (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1933), pp. 222-223.

[92]AH, "Comfort," in Proper Studies, op. cit., p. 298.

[93]AH, Science, Liberty and Peace, op. cit., passim. Also "The Final Revolution," in Contact, op. cit., passim.

[94]See Letters, AH to E.S.P. Haynes, Mar. 19th, 1940, op. cit., p. 451. Also, "The Final Revolution," Contact, op. cit., p. 12 and Science, Liberty and Peace, op. cit., p. 12.

willingly and even anxiously:

> It seems to me perfectly in the cards that there will be within the next generation or so a pharmacological method [that is a method utilizing drugs] of making people love their servitude, and producing dictatorship without tears, so to speak. . . . People will in fact have their liberties taken away from them but will rather enjoy it, because they will be distracted from any desire to rebel--by propaganda, brain washing, or brain washing enhanced by pharmacological methods. And this seems to me to be THE FINAL REVOLUTION.95

The research that had given nation-states the almost unlimited power of destruction, a greatly enhanced power of surveillance and suggestion, would some day, according to Huxley, be given a "soma"-like drug to make whole populations unmindful of dictatorship. It would seem that Huxley took his predictions in Brave New World quite seriously. This pessimistic attitude had been growing in him for some time. It had led him to take a number of cutting literary swipes at the modern scientific researcher as early as 1923, in his novel Antic Hay. Here he portrays the scientist, Shearwater, as a man so engrossed in physiological research as to be no longer capable of meaningful personal relationships. Science has become for him a surrogate for life itself, an avenue by which he could cut himself off from the rest of the world.[96]

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[95] AH, "The Final Revolution," Contact, op. cit., p. 14. See also AH, "Drugs That Shape Men's Minds," Collected Essays, op. cit., p. 341; AH, "Writers and Readers," The Olive Tree, op. cit., p. 29; AH, "Economists, Scientists and Humanists," op. cit., pp. 216-217.

[96] AH, Antic Hay, op. cit., pp. 266-271, 321-328.

In After Many a Summer, Huxley shows (through the character of Dr. Obispo) how the work of the scientist can be perverted by those with the money to hire and direct research.[97] It is in Huxley's negative utopia, Brave New World, however, that we find the ultimate perversion of science--the one resulting in the "final revolution." This novel was written in 1932, a time when he thought the "final revolution" to be many centuries away. By 1946, however, with the wartime advances in technology and the observed effectiveness of Nazi propaganda, he wasn't at all sure that mankind's capacity to produce the sophisticated means for its own enslavement was so remote.[98] One of the factors that led to repeated revisions of this timetable (in 1946 he gave man a century, and then in his published speech, "The Final Revolution," delivered in 1959, he shortened it to "a generation or so,"[99])

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[97]AH, After Many A Summer, op. cit., passim. Most of the scientists portrayed in Huxley's fiction are immature or crippled personalities. As well as Shearwater and Obispo, there is the reclusive Lord Edward Tantamount in Point Counter Point, the naive Pete in After Many A Summer, the narrow and anti-social Dr. Poole in Ape and Essence (N.Y.: Harper and Bros., 1948), and the extremely one-sided Dr. Henry Maartens in The Genius and the Goddess (London: Chatto & Windus, 1955).

[98]See AH, "Forward" to the Collected Edition of Brave New World (London: Chatto & Windus, 1950), pp. VII-XV.

[99]See also Letters, AH to J. Huxley, Mar. 18, 1946, op. cit., p. 539, and AH to George Orwell, Oct. 21, 1949, Ibid., pp. 604-605.

was his increasing awareness that technology, like political ideologies, was being transformed into an object of idolatrous worship.[100] Describing those who adhere to "technological idolatry" Huxley writes:

> [They] believe their redemption and liberation depend upon material objects, namely machines and gadgets. Technological idolatry is the religion whose doctrines are explicitly or implicitly promulgated in the advertising pages of newspapers and magazines--the source from which millions of men, women and children in the capitalist countries now derive their philosophy of life.101

As Erich Fromm points out, there is, inherent in this attitude, an element of blind surrender to the infallibility of a computer-prescribed future--a fatalistic faith in the predetermined destiny of a mechanistic, infinitely on-going, progress.[102] Progress ceases to be defined in human terms and instead comes to mean efficiency in and organization for ever-increasing production of goods and services.[103] The

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[100]This is a phenomenon that has been maturing within Western man for a long time. See Lewis Mumford, The Condition of Man (N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1944), pp. 241-244.

[101]AH, "Idolatry," in Vedanta for the Western World, op. cit., p. 428, also AH, The Perennial Philosophy, op. cit., pp. 251-252.

[102]Erich Fromm, The Revolution of Hope, op. cit., p. 49.

[103]Ibid., pp. 35-36. See also AH, "Personality and Discontinuity of Mind," where he observes, "The unifying principle by means of which the moderns have tried to co-ordinate the elements of man's nature into a personality is social efficiency," Proper Studies, op. cit., p. 253.

growing popularity of this technological idolatry meant, to Huxley, that a concept of efficiency suited to the world of machines had come to be applied to the life and labor of human beings.[104] The results, he concluded, were disastrous for beyond a certain point too much social (as well as industrial) efficiency is bad for the health:

> A human being is a not very strong animal possessed of a that in its higher reaches is spontaneously creative and capable of apprehending modes of existence that are 'not of this world.' Such a creature cannot, by its very nature, be continuously efficient. A machine, on the contrary, is designed to be efficient all the time. When a man is put in charge of a machine, or when he becomes part of some social or economic organization that is modelled upon the machine, he is compelled to be what it is not natural or moral for him to be. In more than moderate doses efficiency is incompatible with humanity.105

As previously noted, this is particularly manifested in the pathological traits fostered by modern economic and organizational arrangements. However, it is not only in alienation and chronic busyness, or the mental enslavement to ideologies, that men suffer from an increasingly machine-like environment. In such cases the individual is at least able to function from day to day. There are millions of others who exhibit more disabling mental aberrations as a result, in large part, of the high-pressured modern life-style. All in all, there

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[104] AH, "The Final Revolution," Contact, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

[105] AH, Themes and Variations, op. cit., p. 41. Also see Erich Fromm's discussion on the effects of an efficiency criterion for success in The Revolution of Hope, op. cit., pp. 28-50. Finally, for a good fictional account of what

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[104] AH, "The Final Revolution," Contact, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

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high-pressured modern life-style. All in all, there seems to be a sort of "psychological regression," to use Huxley's phrase, which since the industrial revolution, has been roughly proportionate to our technological progression. Under the cirumstances what he felt was needed was preventative medicine, but the implication is that it must be of a sociological nature:

> Still larger hospitals, yet kinder treatment of patients, more psychiatrists, and better phills--we need them all and need them urgently. But they will not solve our problem. In this field prevention is incomparably more important than cure; for cure merely returns the patient to an environment which begets mental illness. But how is prevention to be achieved? That is the sixty-four billion dollar question.106

Thus Huxley suggests that if one is really interested in prevention, one is led to a most damaging critique of modern industrial life.[107] Prevention implies a change in daily economic and political relations.

Huxley was convinced, then, that science in the hands of men interested mainly in power or profits was dehumanizing the world. In addition, he thought that science had the potential to create ways of inducing men into voluntary slavery. This latter conclusion is premature for the

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this sort of life-style carried to its logical extreme, can mean for human life see Kurt Vonnegut, Player Piano (N.Y.: Delacorte Press, 1952) or Ira Levin, This Perfect Day, A Fawcett Crest Book (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publ., 1970).

[106] Ibid.

[107] As early as 1931, in "To the Puritan all Things are Impure," Huxley briefly makes just such a critique: "Man

potential for brainwashing, subliminal suggestion and control of the subsconscious is far from perfected or even proven.[108] Huxley's basic concern, however, over the misuse of so much know-how can hardly be faulted. As he observed, the development and application of technology within his own lifetime seemed to indicate the existence of two dynamic patterns of development.[109] Each seemed to have its own set of advocates who were competiting for the right to shape man's future.

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is an animal that thinks. To be a first-rate human being, man must be both a first-rate animal and a first-rate thinker . . . . From the time of Plato onwards there has been a tendency to exalt the thinking, spiritual man at the expense of the animal. Christianity confirmed Platonism; and now, in its turn, what I may call Fordism, or the philosophy of industrialism, confirms, though with important modifications, the spiritualizing doctrines of Christianity. Fordism demands that we should sacrifice the animal man (and along with the animal large portions of the thinking, spiritual man) not indeed to God, but to the machine. There is no place in the factory, or in that larger factory which is the modern industrialized world, for animals on the one hand, or for artists, mystics, or even, finally, individuals on the other. Of all the ascetic religions Fordism is that which demands the cruellest mutilations of the human psyche--demands the cruellest mutilations and offers the smallest spiritual returns. Rigorously practised for a few generations, this dreadful religion of the machine will end by destroying the human race. Music at Night, Collected Edition (London: Chatto and Windus, 1930), p. 180.

[108]For a view that throws some doubt on technology's real capacity at present to constitute such a threat see J.A.C. Brown, Techniques of Persuasion (Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin Books, 1963), pp. 300-308.

[109]Letters, AH, to J. Huxley, Jan. 5, 1959, op. cit., p. 859. Also, "The Final Revolution," in Contact, op. cit., p. 12.

One pattern is geared to human needs and the other to the needs of evolving technology. Business and government in the West seemed to Huxley to be moving down the latter road:

> And one of the gravest dangers that confronts us is preceisely this: that we are being forced by technology along the [course patterned after its own needs]. Technology tends to grow and develop according to the laws of its own being. It doesn't at all develop according to the laws of our being. The two things are quite separate, and man now finds himself subordinated to this thing which he created, and subject to its laws, which are not at all human laws.110

The result is a slow but steady perversion of man's nature, conforming it to the needs of mechanization rather than integrating technology into a basically human environment. Huxley condemns the consequences of this lop-sided development, pointing out that it is so counter to man's natural needs that it stimulates overt, as well as covert, pathologies and, ultimately, can only lead to a dehumanization of the species. In this he agreed with Wordsworth, who wrote in his poem, The Tables Turned:

> Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
> Our meddling intellect
> Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things--
> We murder to dissect.
>
> Enough of Science and of Art;
> Close up those barren leaves;
> Come forth and bring with you a heart
> That watches and receives.

"'Those barren leaves of science and art'" Huxley believed,

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110 Ibid.

"are barren only when regarded as ultimate ends."[111] He feared that it is exactly such "ultimate ends" that applied science and technology had become.

Despite their potentially disastrous misuses, science and technology are here to stay. Huxley himself realized that to simply do away with technological devices (even if this was possible) would mean widespread hardship and, very probably death for countless millions.[112] Accepting the fact that we must live with "progress" Huxley addresses himself to the all-important problem of "making the best of both worlds so that we can enjoy the results of technology, which are order and efficiency and profusion of goods, and at the same time enjoy what human beings have always held to be of supreme importance, that is to say, liberty and the possibility of spontaneity."[113]

How is this to be realized? The answer entails the basic political-economic preconditions of all of Huxley's reforms--decentralization of power and individual cooperation.[114]

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[111] Letters, AH to Miss Hepworth and Mr. Green, 1942, op. cit., p. 474. It was Wordsworth's poem that gave Huxley the title for his novel Those Barren Leaves. It fits well this work which shows up the vacuousness of those who use, in this case, art as a surrogate for meaningful daily existences.

[112] AH, "Spinoza's Worm," in Do What You Will, op. cit., p. 68. Also see "The Final Revolution," op. cit., p. 15.

[113] Ibid.

[114] AH, Science, Liberty and Peace, op. cit., pp. 25-26, 56-57.

In addition, he suggests that scientists establish contact with representatives of non-scientific specializations and the lay public. They should convene conferences at which they would judge what the future was likely to bring and how to best go about mitigating (through specific educational,[115] legal and governmental policies) the effects of increasing technological "progress."[116] In short scientists should start to act as though they are morally responsible for the results of their work. If mankind adopts such an aware and far-sighted policy, the chances are good that applied science could provide not only freedom from much alienating labor, more leisure time, and a minimum of economic security, but also a freer and more flexible social environment.[117] If not, we can look forward to a world which, if it doesn't blow itself to bits, will be designed along lines "not at all human."

IV - THE INEVITABLE RISK IN IT ALL: WAR

To the dangers of the "us vs. them" thinking inherent in nationalist ideologies and the reinforcement of

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[115] Letters, AH to Julian Huxley, January 5, 1959, op. cit., p. 859. Here Huxley suggests the need for a "psychological education in the art of being spontaneous," in order to temper the effects of the inevitably necessary "technical education" many will receive.

[116] AH, "The Final Revolution," Contact, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

[117] This Huxley tries to show in his positive utopia, Island, op. cit., passim.

governments with ever more effective techniques to shape opinion we must add the post-war development of massively destructive weapons. The result is the hazard of nuclear war. In Huxley's opinion such a war is, in fact, a constant risk because the nationalist sentiments, which define reality for those who control such suicidal weapons, are based on the emotions of fear, hatred, and egotistical superiority.[118] The spectre of war is only enhanced when we add that over-population and the present mal-distribution of wealth and resources will most likely trap two-thirds of the world's peoples in revolution and dictatorship-breeding misery for the indefinite future.[119]

Despite this risk and the tendency for people to see war between nations as "something cosmically ordained by the nature of things,"[120] there is, in Huxley's view, nothing necessary about it:

> War is not a law of nature, nor even a law of human nature. It exists because men wish it to exist; and we know, as a matter of historical fact, that the intensity of that wish has varied from absolute zero to a frenzied maximum.121

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[118]For a discussion, within the broader context of nationalism, of some of these emotions see AH, Beyond Mexique Bay (N.Y.: Harpers & Brothers, 1934), pp. 74-78.

[119]See Ah, Politics of Ecology, op. cit., p. 5.

[120]Ibid., p. 4.

[121]AH, Ends and Means, op. cit., pp. 93-94.

Here Huxley expresses his belief that man's destructive behavior as expressed in the act of war is largely a function of perceptions which, in turn, are largely culturally determined. With this opinion Huxley seems to come into conflict with Freud's theory that aggressiveness is instictual in man. The conflict, however, might be more apparent than real. Huxley, who in no way accepted Freud's work uncritically, does not deny a possible aggressive instinct in man. He, as William James before him, simply suggests that there is nothing necessary about that aggression expressing itself in the form of war. This position in not in direct opposition to Freud who writes that while it is no use to try to rid men of their aggressiveness, for it is inbred, "it is enough to try to divert [it] to such an extent that it need not find expression in war."[122] In this, at least, Freud and Huxley would agree.

Huxley would probably find himself in a bit more disagreement with Anthony Storr in whose work Human Aggression[123] there is the suggestion that men's need to express aggression is as instinctive as the sexual drive and that the display of this drive in the form of warfare is very much

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[122]Sigmund Freud, "Why War" in The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, ed. by James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1964), Vol. XXii, p. 212.

[123]Anthony Storr, Human Aggression (N.Y.: Bantam Books, 1968).

ingrained. Yet even Storr is careful to write that this does not mean that "strife need necessarily take the form of war and wholesale destruction."[124]

Huxley's concern is with the attitude toward war engendered by dogmatic ideological and religious positions. An attitude of inevitability which, since the 19th century, has tended to cause more and more of Western society's expanding economic base to rest directly or indirectly on war-related production. Incredibly, this has turned at least the threat of war (if not the real thing) into something of an economic necessity.

Be it for economic or psychological reasons the threat of war--very possibly on a nuclear scale--is more or less constant. The insecurity inherent in this persistent fear has an inevitably negative effect on the individual's spiritual state of being. Just as personal hatreds and fears can eclipse spiritual self-awareness, so much greater are the effects of war:

> And to the peace that passes understanding [that comes with spiritual enlightenment] we have to go by way of the humble and very ordinary peace between nations and within them (for wars and violent revolutions have the effect of more or less totally eclipsing God for the majority of those involved in them).125

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[124] Ibid., p. 59.

[125] AH, The Perennial Philosophy, op. cit. p. 87. Also AH, "Eternity and Time," in American Scholar, 14 (Summer, 1945), p. 301; and Ends and Means, op. cit., pp. 348-349.

Ideally, then, Huxley would like to see the abandonment of violence as a means of settling all disputes, whether between individuals or nations. If this proves impossible on the scale of the individual it must, at least, be constantly strived for on the larger scale for, as he observes, nonviolent action has become "in this age of scientific progress, humanity's only practical substitute for hopeless revolution and self-stultifying or suicidal war."[126]

V - THE CULMINATION: BRAVE NEW WORLD AND THE FINAL REVOLUTION

The potential consequences of the social, political, and scientific trends he saw developing around him preoccupied Huxley throughout his life. In his first novel, Crome Yellow, published in 1921, the cynical Mr. Scogan speculates on the possibilities of both bottle-babies bred in "vast state incubators," and the disappearance of the family unit.[127] "Wanted, a New Pleasure," appearing in 1931, predicts the development of something "we could sniff or swallow" which would "abolish our solitude as individuals, attune us with our fellows in a glowing exaltation of affection and make life in all its aspects seem not only worth living, but divinely

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[126] AH, Science, Liberty and Peace, op. cit., p. 8.

[127] AH, Crome Yellow, op. cit., pp. 46-47.

beautiful and significant."[128] An article of 1933, "Economicsts, Scientists and Hunanists," considers the possibility of the suppression of certain aspects of scientific research for the sake of economic and social stability, the use of infant and childhood conditioning and the control of intelligence levels in order to raise up a population of perfect mass-producers and mass-consumers.[129] "Writers and Readers" (1936) discussed a "completely and infallibly effective" system of propaganda[130] combining the persuasiveness of good literary technique and the mind-altering capacities of pharmacology. 1948 saw the publication of what is perhaps Huxley's most terrifying work, Ape and Essence, which deals with life in California after an atomic war.[131] The decade of the fifties was a time when Huxley formulated his concept of the "final Revolution" and showed how man was continuing to prepare the scientific and technological basis for his own dehumanization.[132]

It was in 1932, however, that Huxley published the work that represents the ultimate triumph of the dehumanizing

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[128]AH, Wanted a New Pleasure," in Music At Night, op. cit., pp. 254-255.

[129]AH, "Economicsts, Scientists and Humanists," op. cit., passim.

[130]AH, "Writers and Readers," in The Olive Tree, op. cit., p. 29.

[131]AH, Ape and Essence, op. cit., passim.

[132]AH, "The Final Revolution," op. cit., passim.

application of social control--Brave New World. Here Huxley appears in the role of a prophet--'prophet' in the sense of the literature of messianic vision which founds itself upon a tension between, as Leo Baeck phrased it, "what existed or was still there and that which was becoming and yet to be."[133] In the capacity of a prophetic conceptualization , Brave New World is the "becoming and yet to be" of the existing pursuit of happiness and "good times" as ends in themselves, under the direction of moralistic and semi-omnipotent technocrats.

As such, this novel represents in the extreme the result of yet another of modern man's idolatries--that of the moral idolater. This type of idolater, according to Huxley, puts his faith neither in political or economic schemes nor in the promise of the machine. Having more insight into human nature, he realizes that it is the indivdiual who must be reformed.[134] In Brave New World the moral idolater's are the "World Controllers" and the sole purpose of economics, politics and technology is the maintenance of the "reformed" personality. Indeed, the ethical ideal of the moral idolater has become, as in the case of Brave New World, an object of worship. The "happy citizen" becomes an end in itself, for the sake of which the individual

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[133]Leo Baeck, Judiasm and Christianity, trans. by W. Kaufman (N.Y.: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1958), p. 31.

[134]AH, "Idolatry," in Vedanta for the Western World, op. cit., pp. 429-430.

must be twisted and shaped.[135]

It does not take much reflection to see how those who do worship ethical ideals can become the most thorough of tyrants, be they the Seventeenth Century Puritan Fathers or the Brave New World plyers of soma six hundred years hence. The military or purely political dictators usually desire a populations' cooperation. The vitally important question for them is not what the people think, but rather how they act. The moral idolaters, however, must be primarily concerned with people's minds. As rulers then, they cannot be satisfied "until they wield direct psychological and physiological power.[136]

In Brave New World, the rulers have achieved this power. Under the auspices of technology and psychopharmacology they control all aspects of life: birth, education, recreation, sex, labor, and finally even death. The whole psycho-physical

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[135]Here again the application of science to the tasks of social conditioning set out in Brave New World are foreshadowed by the speculations of Scogan in Crome Yellow. Predicting the death of eccentricity because it inspires such fear in the hearts of the "burgesses," Huxley has Scogan predict that eccentricity will soon exist only as "a sort of Red Indian Reservation planted in the midst of a vast horde of poor whites." op. cit., pp. 58-59. In Brave New World, of course, this is literally where he puts it.

One might, at this point, suggest that Huxley himself comes close to the sin of moral idolatry. The well-rounded amphibian is certainly for him an ethical ideal toward which he encourages every individual to strive. But Huxley never deifys his ideal as do his "World Controllers." Huxley aims at spiritual self-awareness--a knowledge of a universal Godhead from which, he believes, all consciousness derives. This spiritual awareness is Huxley's real end and amphibiousness is a state of being which facilitates it. This is the basis for his ethical ideal. It is a means, not an end.

[136]AH, "Variations on a Philosopher," in Themes and Variations, op. cit., pp. 126-127.

being, to the very depths of the subconscious, is fully manipulated. In Brave New World Huxley fulfills his earlier prediction made in Proper Studies--"One day, perhaps, the earth will have been turned into one vast feather-bed, with man's body dozing on top of it and his mind underneath, like Desdemona, smothered."[137] What is not directly controlled is mankind's spiritual dimension. Given the watchful manipulation of the mind and the body, however, the spirit need not be considered. For all intents and purposes, the spiritual element in the nature of the citizen of Brave New World has ceased to exist.

Huxley saw Brave New World latent in the economic and social conditions around him; this is apparent in "Economists, Scientists and Humanists."[138] Here he carried to their logical conclusions the basic needs of modern capitalists. According to Huxley industrialists require stability and uniformity.[139] On one hand, they need stability because large amounts of machinery, once set into motion, become unprofitable if halted or run only irregularly, on the other, uniformity is necessary because to maintain mass-production at its most profitable level one must have a

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[137] AH, "Comfort As An End In Itself," in Proper Studies, op. cit., p. 299.

[138] This article appears (1933) a year after Brave New World and their similar themes are more than coincidental.

[139] AH, "Economists, Scientists and Humanists," op. cit., p. 213.

predictable mass market. That is, one needs the greatest number of people with approximately the same tastes and wants. In this context, Huxley describes the plausibility of the manipulation of social and political factors by such powerful interests as big business in order to create, over time, a race of rather unintelligent but obedient producers and consumers. With reference to eugenics, he asks how the industrialist would employ such a tool:

> Would he necessarily be anxious to improve the race? By no means necessarily. He might actually wish to deteriorate it. His ideal, we must remember, is not the perfect human being, but the perfect mass-producer and mass-consumer. Now perfect human beings probably make very bad mass-producers. It is quite on the cards that industrialists will find, as machinery is made fool-proof, that the great majority of jobs can be better preformed by stupid people than by intelligent ones. Again, stupid people are probably the state's least troublesome subjects, and is more likely to be stable than one with a high proportion of intelligent people.140

Also for the sake of stability and uniformity, these same interests would have to control all technological research, for, as Huxley further explains:

> Nothing is more subversive than knowledge. Any day some new discovery may make all existing equipment obsolete . . . or else, by changing man's physiological habits, radically alter his whole way of thinking and feeling.141

When billions are invested in assembly lines, physical plants, and warehouses full of gadgets and goods, new knowledge,

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[140] Ibid., pp. 219-220.

[141] Ibid., pp. 213-214.

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[140] Ibid., pp. 219-220.

[141] Ibid., pp. 213-214.

habits and tastes could be ruinous. Stability will ultimately demand that there be no unsettling political opinions; the application of psychological and pharmacological techniques to propaganda and education will make sure that, by the time a person reaches "what is somewhat ironically called the age of reason, he will be wholly unable to think for himself."[142] All these possibilities exist he concludes, latent in both the Soviet exploitation of Pavolv's work, and the frightening implications of the research of American behaviorists with young children.[143]

Within the context of Brave New World, the control of science and technology to maintain political and social stability and uniformity is exercised by moral idolaters rather than industrialists. Their ends require not guaranteed profits but assured happiness and comfort.[144] Huxley saw as latent in the attitudes of his contemporaries this yearning for happiness as an end in itself.[145] Science was quickly developing a means to this end under the auspices of psycho-pharmacology--the production of a drug which would "make

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[142] Ibid., p. 216.

[143] Ibid., p. 215.

[144] AH, Brave New World, op. cit., p. 180.

[145] Huxley believed that happiness was always the product of something else: of work deemed worthy of doing, of the fulfillment of a duty, or of the disinterested love of another person, etc. True happiness, then, requires the same sort of environment that best facilitates worthy labor and the like. This would be an environment of liberty as well as security. See AH, "The Problem of Faith," in Harpers, op. cit., pp. 214-216.

people love their servitude"[146] and willingly, even anxiously, trade freedom and responsibility for security and "good times."[147]

In Brave New World Huxley names this drug soma after the ancient psychedelic of the Aryan invaders of India. The soma of Huxley's novel is an imaginary agent which can do any of three otherwise contradictory things; it can act as a euphoric, a sedative, or an hallucinat.[148] As such it is the miracle drug that guarantees the ultimate effectiveness of all of Brave New World's other "reforms." As Huxley puts it:

> The daily soma ration was an insurance against personal maladies, social unrest, and the spread of subversive ideas.149

What conditioning has made a compulsive, "knee-jerk" type of life-style, soma makes more than tolerable. There are no anxieties because boredom, alientation and lonliness have been drugged out of existence. As Mustapha Mond, Huxley's Brave New World Controller describes it,

> As if ever, by some unlucky chance, anything unpleasant should somehow happen, why, there's always soma to give you a holiday from the facts. And there's soma to calm your anger, to reconcile you to your enemies,

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[146] AH, "The Final Revolution," in Contact, op. cit., p.14.

[147] AH, Brave New World, op. cit., pp. 178-188.

[148] See Huxley's remarks on soma in Writers At Work, The Paris Review Interviews, II, (N.Y.: Viking Press, 1963),

[149] AH, Brave New World Revisited (London: Chatto & Windus, 1959), p. 100.

> to make you patient and long-suffering. In the past you could only accomplish these things by making a great effort and after years of hard moral training. Now, you swallow two or three half gramme tablets, and there you are. Anybody can be virtuous now. You can carry at least half your morality about in a bottle. Christianity without tears - that's what soma is.150

This use of a self-transcending drug is, for our purposes, the most interesting and significant aspect of Brave New World's applied science. There is nothing in the book that Huxley did not believe to be germinating in the world in which he himself lived. Latent in the search for drugs able to bolster man's capacity to cope with modern industrial conditions lay another kind of agent:

> A drug capable of making people feel happy in situations where they would normally feel miserable. Such a drug would be a blessing, but a blessing fraught with grave political dangers. By making harmless chemical euphoria freely available, a dictator could reconcile an entire population to a state of affairs to which self-respecting human beings ought not to be reconciled. Despots have always found it necessary to supplement force by political or religious propaganda. In this sense the pen is mightier than the sword. But mightier than either the pen or the sword is the pill.151

The propaganda techniques and conditioning procedures

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150 AH, Brave New World, op. cit., p. 195.

151 AH, "Drugs that Change Men's Minds," in Collected Essays, op. cit., p. 314. Within this context we might quote De Quincey, who in his Confessions of an English Opium Eater wrote of opium, "Here was a panacea . . . for all human woes; here was the secret of happiness, about which philosophers had disputed for so many ages, at once discovered; happiness might now be bought for a penny, and carried in the waist-coat pocket; portable ecstasies might be corked up in a pint-bottle; and peace of mind could be sent down by the mail." op. cit., p. 157.

that are being developed today are probably incapable of accomplishing the "final revolution" without the help of some such drug. With it, men can be reconciled to anything and everything, even to a life of hell--not a hell of horror and pain painted by Orwell in his 1984, but rather the all too painless hell of Brave New World from which everything new and fresh, as well as rough and awkward has been eliminated.

There are probably two reasons as to why Huxley choose to emphasize the negative use of drugs at this time. First, viewing the trends in science as he did, from a position outside the boundaries of socially conditioned perception, it was hard for him to see them being used except to make bearable otherwise intolerable conditions. In the 1930's the early generations of amphetamines and barbituates were playing just such a role for many people. Secondly, in 1932 when Brave New World appeared, Huxley had not yet discovered any positive vehicle by which to transcend his cynical pessimism. The serious, in depth explorations into mysticism which gave him what he considered to be insight into mankind's spiritual universality were still in the future. Only after he had begun them would he be able to portray drugs (or more specifically, drugs which facilitate spiritual self-awareness) in a positive light.

In the early 1930's, however, both Brave New World and "Economists, Scientists and Humanists" only could reflect

Huxley's frustration with modern manifestations of "progress." As he lamented in the latter:

> Our present troubles are not due to Nature. They are entirely artificial, genuinely home-made. The very arts and sciences which we have used to conquer Nature have turned on their creators and are now conquering us.152

Huxley did not stop with this. When all was said and done, the arts and sciences, as well as all other forms of knowledge, are still "morally neutral" and become "good for evil according as [they are] applied."[153] For his own part, Huxley choose "wisely." He sought to turn the various psycho-physical techniques he learned from Bates and Alexander to humanist ends. The knowledge and insight he derived from the mystics of East and West were treated similarly.

The message inherent in Brave New World is that politics can be, broadly speaking, an enterprise which is guided by man's urge to transcend himself--that is to make himself other (presumably better) than that which he is. Political movements that organize communities around dogmas and doctrines with utopian visions demonstrate this fact both in theory and practice. Science, in turn, has greatly enhanced the power of such movements to experiment in achieving the "classless society" or "the new man." As Brave New World points out, Huxley's fear is that the political (wholly secular)

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[152] Op. cit., p. 210, or, as the Savage in Brave New World quoting King Lear, put it, "The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices make instruments to plague us." op. cit., p. 193.

[153] AH, "Economists, Scientist and Humanists," op. cit., pp. 222-223.

channelling of this urge to transcend one's present physical and mental circumstances has almost always led to a situation where ends come to justify means and man becomes less, not more, human. Indeed, fascinated and terrified as he was by man's headlong conquest of nature, Huxley came to see his Brave New World as a portentous warning--a warning that a watershed had been reached. Much of the human race, he thought, was now organized on such a mass scale, its scientific know-how so great, that there was real danger of a "final revolution" and the permanent loss of the capacity to achieve his "amphibian" vision.

This warning is underlined by two very simple conclusions which Huxley puts forward. The first is that forced unity, even made pleasant through one or another form of conditioning, is fatal to any effort at spiritual awareness.[154] The second is that good ends are not realized by the use of bad means. As simplistic and common sense as these conclusions are Huxley believed that they bore repeating and elaboration for, he felt, very few of his fellows acted as if they were aware of them.

Forced unity through centralization of power meant one of two things to Huxley: either the sacrifice of the freedom necessary for self-exploration and development (the

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[154] See AH, Perennial Philosophy, op. cit., p. 11; Ends and Means, op. cit., pp. 348-9; and Grey Eminence, op. cit., p. 247.

necessary basis for any worthwhile spiritual self-transcendence) or, more contemporaneously, the greater wielding of power and privilege leading to ever greater temptations to greed, pride, vanity, and cruelty, resulting in the enhancement of paranoia and fear in an oppressor-oppressed atmosphere. In either case the realization of the social conditions which Huxley required for his ideal of amphibiousness becomes virtually impossible. As he warns in Ape and Essence:

> Love casts out fear; but conversely fear casts out love. And not only love. Fear casts out intelligence, casts out goodness, casts out all thought of beauty and truth. . . . Fear of the demonstrably fatal institutions for which, in our suicidal loyalty, we are ready to kill and ide. Fear of the Great Men whom we have raised, by popular accalim, to a power which they use, inevitably, to murder and enslave us. Fear of the War we don't want and yet do everything we can to bring about.155

Unfortunately, such centralized unity is often considered to be a prerequisite to progress. Unity facilitates action--action in the form of technology, social organization, economic development, defence, etc. This sort of activity, in turn, soon becomes synonymous with cultural advance. It is readily apparent that the education of people in the knowledge and techniques that lead to spiritual awareness is of little importance in the pursuit of such activity. Indeed, it might even be considered as dangerous to such unity and a distraction from the pursuit of progress.[156]

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[155] Op. cit., pp. 51-52.

[156] AH, The Perennial Philosophy, op. cit., p. 294.

Here we see the great dichotomy between the concept of progress as Huxley defines it and that based on the hope of endlessly increasing material wealth. For Huxley, progress is the realization of full potential--particularly spiritual potential-- of the individual human being and not just of available material resources. A society is "good" to the extent that its citizens are free to pursue this goal, utilize the various techniques of meditation and contemplation, and generally develop their psycho-physical selves in ways not detrimental to spiritual growth.[157]

For the followers of this doctrine of life (Huxley and the Perennial Philosophers) the life-style characteristic of the West is counter-productive. The result can be seen as a genuine rivalry and the Perennial Philosophers end up fearing the "modernists" for the same reason many modern ideologues fear evangelical mystics--both see each other as advocates of false gods, of unimportant pursuits. For Huxley a community can not have two gods. If one chooses to exalt the activities that eventually lead to a deification of a political and economic unity one must at the same time sacrifice the God of the "Divine Ground." In this rivalry Huxley knows that "his side" is loosing:

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[157] Ibid., pp. 80 and 294. Also AH, Ends and Means, op. cit., p. 345 and AH, "Variations on a Philosopher," in Themes and Variations, op. cit., p. 80. Finally, Letters, AH to O. Flechtheim, March 29, 1946, op. cit., p. 542.

> Technological progress, nationalism, and war seem to guarantee that the immediate future of the world shall belong to various forms of totalitarianism. But a world safe for totalitarianism is a world, in all probability, made very unsafe for mysticism the theocentric religion. And a world unsafe for mysticism is a world where the only proved method of transforming personality will be less practiced, where fewer and fewer people will possess any direct, experimental knowledge of reality to set up against the false doctrine of totalitarian anthropocentrism and the pernicious ideas and practices of nationalistic psuedo-mysticism.158

The outlook is no better when we come to Huxley's second conclusion--that concerning ends and means. If good ends are to be accomplished, one must remember that which Huxley never tired of pointing out, "Good ends can be achieved only by the employment of appropriate means. The end cannot justify the means, for the simple and obvious reason that the means employed determine the nature of the ends produced."[159] Huxley's letter to Phillippe Dumaine, dated January 19, 1947, elaborates:

> We imagine we can coerce Nature and use our fellow men as our tools and instruments, and not merely escape condign punishment, but actually achieve an increase in happiness and virtue. Again, the Hindus and the Buddhists were never tired of insisting on the law of Karma--the law that 'God is not mocked, but as a man sows, so shall he reap.' Naively, we assume that we can sow atomic bombs, concentration camps, mass deportation and wholesale slaughter and enslavement--can sow these atrocities and still, after another two or three wars to end war, after five or six more revolutions and thirty or forty more Five Year Plans, reap physical well-being and

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[158] AH, Grey Eminence, op. cit., p. 247.

[159] AH, Ends and Means, op. cit., p. 9.

moral perfection in a new Age of Gold.[160]

Brave New World demonstrates this. The social order the World Controllers tried to erect was one of peace and happiness. However, they mistook drugged euphoria for contentment, and mere "good times" for true happiness. Thus, the means they choose--conspicuous consumption, mind-conditioning, and enforced uniformity--produced quite a different end. It produced an end which was intrinsic in the means: enslavement to a sham happiness buttressed by soma.

Thus the politicians and technocrats might preach nationalism, ideological loyalty, economic and political centralization, ad nauseum, but what angers Huxley is that he sees all this being offered as a means to basically human and humane ends. In his kindest moments he dismissed such doublethink as pernicious "inspirational twaddle," but, as the letter to Dumaine infers, he also viewed it as criminal.

It is obvious that on the level of "mass" society the picture Huxley perceived in the 1930's and onward was every bit as dark as the ones sketched in his early cynical

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[160] Letters, op. cit., p. 563. Erich Fromm has also put the point well. He notes that neither individual nor social development takes place in the form of a scattered and unconnected assimilation of traits, but rather in the formulation of hierarchal "structures." There are many such structures one can build up but each has its own distinctive qualities. One cannot take a trait native to structure 'A' and integrate it into a behavior pattern that is the function of structure 'B'. In practical terms this translates thus: we know that many people in the West seek to be competitively aggressive so as to be economically successful. At the same time they often strive to be tender, loving and full of integrity. According to Fromm, however, this is at best naive. One cannot choose a good end, say, that of being a loving and

novels. Furthermore, his faith in his own prophecies precluded his believing in the possibility of any large scale conversion to his way of thinking. Yet an optimism persisted. He continued to try to be the "pragmatic" moral philosopher, if not for a "mass" public, then for the "individuals" he was sure would be listening.[161]

Huxley was in the process of slowly developing his own set of means to what he considered to be man's true end. They would be, in part, what he calls "preventative ethics;" that is the arrangement of political and economic institutions so as to "create social circumstances of such a nature that individuals will not be given opportunities for behaving

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compassionate person while at the same time employing means more suited to a 19th century Captain of Industry. The two reflect incompatible structures of behavior. Just so, on the collective level, most people want their country to be politically unified, economically affluent, and militarily strong. Simultaneously they desire the pursuit of peace and spiritual values. One cannot however, pursue an end such as peace, (despite the protestations of the politicians) with means such as seeking affluence via a war-production based economy and aggressive foreign policy. In the end, means and ends are one. The Buddhists law of Karma prevails. See The Revolution of Hope, op. cit., pp. 90-91.

[161] Ibid., p. 117. Huxley is, if you will, simultaneously an idealist and a realist. He believes that under proper circumstances (that is in decentralized small communities) men can be brought to act with considerably more love and compassion than they do at present. This belief is clearly implied in Ends and Means, The Perennial Philosophy, Island and numerous essays and letters. At the same time he is not at all naive concerning the easy workability of utopian projects. In Island Huxley attempts to demonstrate the technique and procedures necessary to a relatively "good" society. What he is saying is that these means really do exist. But then, realistically, he has "evil" in the form of imperialistic conquest carry the day, as if to say that means are not enough--there must be universal good will (and the hope for that is utopian). Finally, in an insightful essay titled "Ozymandias"

in an undesirable, that is to say in an excessively 'attached way."[162] The use of such negative arrangements must be followed by the maximization of opportunities for behaving well, for basing action on what he sees as the primary virtues of love, compassion and understanding. What are positive means to these pro-life ends? They are primarily of two kinds: first, education in the broadest sense of the word. Education, for Huxley, is not only of the mind but also of the body and spirit. It forms the path by which the psycho-physical organism can not only learn to function at its peak capacity, but also to bring itself to that condition of overall sensitivity best suited to mystical insight. Secondly, there is what might be called education's culminating step--the careful use of psychedelic agents to facilitate spiritual awareness.

A full analysis of Huxley's means within the context of a functioning community must await a consideration of his final novel, Island. Now we must consider in detail his thoughts on the two specific positive means just mentioned: education and psychedelics. With them Huxley meant to show the way to the controlled and safe method of self-transcendence that mankind has been intrinsically seeking from time immemorial.

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he analyses the reasons for the failure of the utopian experiment called the Llano del Rio Co-operative Colony in California and Nevada in 1914. Adonis and the Alphabet, op. cit., pp. 87-104.

[162] AH, Ends and Means, op. cit., p. 16. Here once more the word "attached" refers to attachment to material objects, ideological dogmas, the ego, etc.

CHAPTER III

HUXLEY'S ROLE FOR EDUCATION

Huxley is interested in education specifically in so far as it can help produce the "amphibious" man. That such a man was not being produced by the schools was proof for Huxley that Western society generally does not encourage its citizens to fully explore their potentials and that education, at least as practiced in England and the United States, was geared to the maintenance of less than satisfactory social values and practices. It will not do to read into this position any thought that Huxley perceives Western educational structures as under the sway of some autocratic plot that guides the workings of every particular school or teacher. He does not. Teachers are individuals and schools tend to adapt their teaching to the economic contexts from whence they draw their students. However, in any particular school both students and teachers work within the same value-structured environment and the cultural values and mores within which they are bathed will broadly guide and define their actions as educators and learners.

Huxley is convinced that it is the context within which the educator and student works--the value-structure

which defines goals--that is deficient. Mistaking socially acceptable lives for fulfilling ones, too many people, he believes, rest content with an incomplete (and, he asserts, in some ways deadening) educational process. There can be little doubt that Huxley believes part of the reason for this acquiescence is that education (again, particularly in England and the United States) has become a victim of a vicious circle, kept going by an undercurrent of alienation, that breeds feelings of apathy and impotency. One might have vague feelings that society's institutions are less than humanly satisfying but the job of bureaucratic reform seems so vast, so massive, that the "average man" dismisses such feelings or simply ignores them. This is, in effect, an abdication to an alientated state and the acceptance of man-made values as inevitable. By such an acceptance one consciously or unconsciously chooses not to understand that the world is largely as it is only because of one's complacency towards it. Huxley's opinion that "there is nothing inherently absurd about the idea that the world which we have so largely constructed can also, if we so desire, be reconstructed on other and better lines" is not just empty idealism.[1] Voluntary incomprehension, however, allows one to by-pass this truth. It allows one to shirk the

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[1]This quote comes from a speech given by AH on Dec. 3, 1935 for a "lunch hour meeting for peace and internationalism." Quoted in Bedford, I, op. cit., p. 311.

responsibility of change with a minimum of guilt--that is, to do what is easiest or most immediately profitable but that which, as responsible human beings, one perhaps ought not to do.[2] This is what will be termed "applied ignorance."

Huxley sets himself the task of analysing this phenomenon of "applied ignorance" and devising ways to break through it so as to better convince people that educational institutions, among others, needed (in this case) to be supplemented with curriculum designed to help produce the "amphibious" man. That people could make, what he considered ultimately to be such revolutionary changes, he had no doubt. He believed that under the prodding of severe circumstances, persisting over a long enough period, men had often been forced to make radical reinterpretations of their perception of the world. These changes (for instance, the rise of the money economy in late medieval times, the more recent technological revolution, etc.), in turn, he perceives to have caused changes in certain aspects of human behavior:

> We see that large scale manipulations of the social structure can bring about certain 'changes in human nature,' but that these changes are rarely fundamental. They do not abolish evil, they merely deflect it into

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[2]As AH states in his essay "Words and Behaviour," "For, consciously or subconsciously, it is with deliberation that we do not know or fail to understand--because incomprehension allows us, with good conscience to evade unpleasant obligations and responsibilities, because ignorance is the best excuse for going on doing what one likes, but ought not, to do." The Olive Tree, op. cit., p. 83.

> other channels. But if the ends we all desire are to be achieved there must be more than a mere deflection of evil, there must be suppression at the source, in the individual will.3

This quote shows an adamant side of Aldous Huxley--a side fed by frustration over what he sees as mankind's persistent yet unnecessary self-destructivness. His choice of the words "changes in human nature" is ambiguous for, even though placed in quotes, he does not define his terms. "Suppression at the source" is also misleading and smacks of intolerance--a characteristic, in truth, quite foreign to Huxley's nature. When it comes to "changing human nature" Huxley does not make a strong case (indeed, what he is really aiming at is bringing out aspects of man's nature that modern society ignores or suppresses). Taken within context, it is evident that Huxley is not here asserting that man's basic drives can be obliterated. It has been shown in the case of Huxley and Freud on aggression that Huxley does not deny fundamental aspects of "human nature." However, the way this "nature" or its basic constituents is expressed is, according to him, controllable through the manipulation of the individual's community environment. In this effort political and social reform are necessary but not sufficient. Reconstruction of our ethical world (and Huxley aims at no less) requires a plan of attack that will bring each individual to a state of awareness from which it will become self-evidently

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[3]AH, Ends and Means, op. cit., p. 24.

right and proper to be tolerant and compassionate toward others while continuously striving to fulfill his own self-potential.[4]

To do this, that is to break down the resistence of the ego that has been conditioned to an affluent but alienating world, would be possible only by an educational approach that "attacked the problem of human nature on all fronts." On this he commented as early as 1931:

> The only philosophy of life which has any prospect of being permanently valuable is a philosophy which takes in all the facts - the facts of mind and the

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[4]There are, however, certain inequities among men that must be considered in any broad-based effort at humanizing him, inequities that cannot be overcome and therefore must be lived with and made the best of. These stem from the undeniable fact that on a psycho-physical level, all people are born with varying capacities. As Huxley points out in "Grace, Predestination and Salvation" (Hibbert Journal, op. cit., pp. 194-195), that whether radical democrats like it or not, there are those who can think faster, play music better, or throw a baseball farther than can others, and do so because of innate talents not shared by all (this is what Huxley calls "grace"). The only thing one can do is to take measures to guard against any socially harmful exploitation of such talents: limit wealth, give a good education to all, etc. (This is what Huxley refers to as limiting grace's negative potentials or doing "justice"). A society has an obligation to render to its citizens a certain amount of such "justice" to insure that all may fully develop the positive potential of those talents they do possess. However, this "justice" of course does not abolish "grace." While later we will discuss the conditions under which "grace" and "justice" might be more fully reconciled to each other, we must now recognize the fact that unless we are willing to go the route of Brave New World, the former must be accepted as a fact of life. Once we have taken this factor of inherent differences into consideration, and if we share Huxley's opinion that the ethical world needs reconstruction, then we incur a certain obligation to do our best to work for that better, more humane, world.

> facts of matter, of instinct and intellect, of individualism and of sociableness.5

In 1963 his sentiments were unchanged:

> It is only by attacking the problem of human nature on all its fronts--the chemical and the psychological, the verbal and the nonverbal, the individual, the cultural and the genetic that we can hope to understand it theoretically and to do something about it in educational and therapeutic practice.6

Here we see not only an open-mindedness, but also a willingness to experiment which, if not to be misused, requires the highest level of integrity on the part of those "attacking" the problem. They will require the same sense of the interrelation of all things and the "amphibian" goal as Huxley himself possessed. Huxley's interpretation of Western history forewarned him that those who fail to consider man's multifacetedness inevitably produce schemes for reform or social arrangements that are much less than humanly adequate. Yet Huxley, or anyone else, has no way of insuring his own high standards to be those of his fellows. If one cannot insure it, then how can one maximize the probability that standards and integrity will be high? One could set up oneself as an example and this, perhaps unconsciously, is what Huxley does. He also stresses the importance of self-awareness (which he linked with integrity) as a prerequisite for any "attacker."

More than any other aspect of his thought, Huxley's ideas on education reflect the flexible, many-dimensional

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[5]AH, "The New Romanticism," in Music at Night & Other Essays op. cit., p. 220. See also Letters, AH to C. Nicholas, Spring, 1947, op. cit., p. 569.

[6]AH, Literature & Science, op. cit., p. 83.

approach to the problems of man. This attitude was developed in large measure through his personal experiences with formal schooling. His own educational background was of the highest calibre. In 1908 he went to Eton as a King's Scholar but his career there was interrupted in 1911 by the eye problems that were to plague him throughout his life. By 1914, however, he was recovered sufficiently to matriculate at Oxford. He graduated in 1916 with a First in English and a recognized gift for writing. Then, in 1917-1918 Huxley taught as a Master at Eton. It was his first (and last) experience as a formal educator. From the account given in Sybille Bedford's biography[7] Huxley was ill-fitted for the routine of the classroom and was soon largely employed in giving tutorials. Bedford summarizes the experience when she writes that "Aldous chafed at the attitudes imposed by school-mastering."[8] If the classroom wasn't Huxley's genre because it seemed inherently limiting, the role of educator in its broadest sense was indeed his true calling.

Huxley's early literary comments on education are admittedly cynical and, at times, elitist. In Antic Hay (1923) for example, the character Gumbril Jr. (who, like the author himself, is portrayed as an ex-school master) suggests that,

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[7] Bedford, I, op. cit., pp. 88-92, 96.

[8] Ibid., p. 92.

> most people ought never to be taught anything at all . . . . What's the use of teaching them anything except to behave well, to work and obey. Facts, theories, the truth about the universe--what good are those to them? Teach them to understand--why, it only confuses them; makes them lose hold of the simple real appearance. Not more than one in a hundred can get any good out of a scientific or literary education.9

The same theme is repeated in "Views of Holland" (1925) when Huxley admits:

> I have no belief in the power of education to turn public school boys into Newtons (it being quite obvious that, whatever opportunity may be offered, it is only those rare beings desirous of learning and possessing a certain amount of native ability who ever learn anything). . . .10

Huxley's attitude did not remain this damning for the overcoming of his own personal problems led him to broaden his definition of what should be taught in school as well as the scope of human ability. As this happened his attitude toward the possibilities inherent in education (now to include not only the arts and sciences but also the teaching of techniques and attitudes leading individuals to maximize their "amphibian" potentials) grew stronger. For reasons that shall be investigated shortly Huxley did not approve of "mass-education" as now practiced and felt that higher education was insufficient because incomplete. He concluded by suggesting a more individualized approach to learning as well as the inclusion of various "new"

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[9]AH, Antic Hay, op. cit., p. 21

[10]AH, Along the Road (London: Chatto & Windus, 1925), p. 104.

curriculums.

The result would be an "amphibious" education--one not only of the mind, but also of the body and spirit--which would serve as a primary means to humanization. Ultimately, Huxley hoped that his educational approach would help people to become more or less immune to ideological dogmatism, suasion by charismatic leaders, and applied ignorance. Thus, he offered his ideas on learning as a testimony to his faith in man's ability to recognize and choose means that would lead him to be all that he can. It was a faith and a hope that Huxley sustained, in a sense by proxy, for all his voluntarily ignorant fellows.

II - EDUCATION AND THE POSITIVE ALTERATION OF PERCEPTION

Huxley held the view that there is something very wrong with modern Western education. For example, in a letter to his brother Julian written on the 22nd of June 1955 he observes:

> It is obvious that education will never give satisfactory results until we learn how to teach children and adults to retain their openness. But the practical problem is as yet hardly even considered by professional educators.[11]

Five years later, in the Spring of 1960, he picks up this theme again in an interview with the Paris Review:

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[11] Letters, op. cit., p. 749.

> Why is it that in most children education seems to destory the creative urge? Why do so many boys and girls leave school with blunted perceptions and a closed mind? A majority of young people seem to develop mental arteriosclerosis forty years before they get the physical kind.12

While ultimately the schools are not the only ones culpable in this matter, it is clear that Huxley sees them as deeply complicit. He bases his opinion on his observations of the educational system in general, and the relationship of the student to his or her school in particular. His criticism, as we will see, are of two kinds. First, he is critical of "mass" education and second he faults the schools for what they do not teach. The "mass" approach to learning is, according to him, based on a false premise.[13] Modern educators, faced with ever more crowded classrooms, have been forced to adopt an over-simplified concept of the mind and the learning process. In practice, he feels, children's heads are dealt with as more or less empty receptables which must be filled with any number of standardized ideas. Schooling comes to represent the stuffing of mental boxes. In this process the "stuffers" have neither the time nor opportunity to do anything but consider every mind-box as basically the same as every other.

Huxley is, of course, generalizing. He is aware that not every teacher takes this attitude while at the same time

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[12] An interview with Aldous Huxley in Writers at Work, The Paris Review Interviews, op. cit., p. 202.

[13] AH, Proper Studies, op. cit., pp. 98-99.

he is convinced that the overall "mass" system of education (particularly in the United States) works on just this premise. He is not denying the existence of particular "progressive" schools with low student-teacher ratios nor special education classes and programs. Yet he is insisting that they are neither widespread nor thorough enough to significantly effect the overall production-like character of the system. It is difficult to prove Huxley right on this matter, although he would most likely find allies in education critics like Paul Goodman.[14] It is probably just as difficult, if not more so, to prove him wrong for the Western school systems do not produce a large number of self-aware free-thinkers in touch with their own creative potential. They do, one can assert, produce a rather standardized product.

Whether one agrees that the "empty receptable" approach to education is widespred or not, it is clear that it is in contravention of biological facts such as the one that "every individual is biologically unique and unlike all other individuals."[15] Thus, if you agree with Huxley that "official systems of education are systems for pumping the same knowledge

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[14] See Paul Goodman, Compulsory Mis-Education (N.Y.: Horizon Press, 1964), passim.

[15] AH, Brave New World Revisited, op. cit., p. 137, also pp. 98-99 and 104ff. Also see Letters, AH to H. Osmond, Feb. 16, 1958, op. cit., p. 847. Finally it should be noted that the need to keep this point constantly in mind has been made by many of the West's most astute minds. For example see John Stuart Mill, "On Liberty" in Bernard Wishy, ed., Prefaces to Liberty: Selected Writings of John Stuart Mill (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959), p. 313.

by the same methods into radically different minds" you must also agree with his conclusion that they do not, in the end, work very well. Minds are "living organisms" and not "dustbins."[16]

Under these conditions if a child does not adjust well to the assembly line, he or she either lags behind or becomes frustrated. Geared to a norm, (and we have already seen what might become of the concept "normal") modern education turns into a Bed of Procrustes stretching some students here and amputating others there. Yet Huxley could find no widespread public dissatisfaction with either present educational procedures or the products turned out. The high school and college graduate was, by and large, considered successfully educated.[17] This is dependent on one's definition of success. Success for Huxley is the "amphibian" man. Furthermore, as he measures the products of present education they rate not as self-aware, creative free-thinkers but rather as reliable, relatively "true-believer" citizens. Thus, as far as he is concerned, most school systems in the West are to be placed along side the political rally and the advertising sheet as part of the sophisticated technology of social conditioning.[18]

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[16]AH, Proper Studies, op. cit., pp. 98-99.

[17]This attitude might well be changing as more people become concerned over the inability of many supposedly educated students to write decent english.

[18]Huxley points up one of the dangers in this present conditioning role of education when he writes in Science, Liberty

For Huxley the result is predictable: mass-education as now constituted indirectly strengthens government rule[19] by bringing practically everyone more effectively under the sway of a state controlled institution with enormous influence over information and the acculturation of youth. Ultimately the price he sees paid for this is spiritual. A concentration on instilling "correct" attitudes for dealing with political and economic realities causes contemporary education to "discourage any preoccupation with spiritual Reality."[20] That is, it totally ignores what, for Huxley, is the most important aspect of the "amphibious" man--a point which will be returned to frequently.

Huxley also attacks the policies of higher education as destructive of the individual's sense of well-rounded humanity when he complains of the deterimental effects of too much academic specialization. Too much specialization or what might be deemed 'field-idiosyncracy' results in what Huxley calls a "nothing-but" outlook on the world. For example, the scientist may often see the world only in terms of his particular science, the economist sees nothing but

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and Peace: "By the education they have received in schools and, later, at the hands of the writers of advertising copy and political propaganda, the great majority of men and women have been conditioned to believe that progressive institutionalization, controlled by private capitalists, or the state, or both together, is an intrinsically beneficient thing and at the same time an inevitable and quasi-natural development." op. cit., p. 56.

[20] AH, Science, Liberty and Peace, op. cit., p. 9.

economic forces at work, the artist, art, the psychologist, psychological forces, ad nauseum. As Huxley phrases it:

> Materialism and mentalism--the philosophies of 'nothing but.' How wearily familiar we have become with that 'nothing but space, time, matter and motion,' that 'nothing but sex,' that 'nothing but economics'! And the no less intolerant 'nothing but spirit,' 'nothing but consciousness,' 'nothing but psychology'--how boring and tiresome they also are! 'Nothing but' is mean as well as stupid. It lacks generosity. Enough of 'nothing but.' It is time to say again, with primitive common sense (but for better reasons), 'not only, but also.'21

This attitude (officially unacknowledged by our institutions of higher learning but flourishing all the same) is, according to Huxley, a perversion of the otherwise necessary and beneficial development of types of specialization and now, unfortunately, the most specialized is often seen as also the most educated. This kind of restricted outlook limits the effectiveness of intellectuals in positively influencing social, political, economic and scientific policies--all of which, especially in the modern world, must be integrated. Necessarily limiting, it must be emphasized, for the "nothing but" outlook is singularly lacking in any ability to provide an accurate picture of our world, as it ignores the truth that all things are interrelated and interdependent.

Early recognition of this problem was exhibited by such institutions as The Massachusetts Institute of Technology,

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[21]AH, "Meditation on the Moon," in Music at Night, op. cit., p. 74. See also AH, The Perennial Philosophy, op. cit., pp. 109-110.

where Huxley came as a visiting professor in 1960.[22] MIT and others have tried to balance a scientifically specialized education with courses in the social sciences and humanities. Huxley considers it a good approach within its limits.

> In science and technology specialization is unavoidable and indeed absolutely necessary. But training for this unavoidable and necessary specialization does nothing to help young amphibians to make the best of their many worlds. Indeed, it pretty obviously prevents anything of the kind. What then is to be done? At the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and in other schools were similar problems have arisen, the answer to this question has found expression in a renewed interest in the humanities. . . . All this is excellent as far as it goes. But does it go far enough?23

The answer is no. Balancing a concentration in the sciences with courses in the humanities is, in Huxley's view, insufficient because the very nature of the material in both cases is symbolic. That is, it allows the student to relate to the world through scientific or verbal symbols and thus ignores a whole non-symbolic dimension of human existence:

> Training in the sciences is largerly on the symbolic level; training in the liberal arts is wholly and all the time on that level. When courses in the humanities are used as the only antidote to too much science and technology, excessive specialization in one kind of symbolic education is being tempered by excessive specialization in another kind of symbolic education. The young amphibians are taught to make the best, not of all their worlds, but only of two varieties of the same world--the world of symbols. But this world of symbols is only one of the worlds in which human beings do their living and their learning. They also inhabit the non-symbolic world of unconceptualized or only slightly conceptualized experience

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[22] Bedford, II, op. cit., pp. 265-72.

[23] AH, "Education on the Nonverbal Level," in Daedalus, op. cit., p. 281.

> [the world of the body's internal organs, the world of intuition and visionary experience, the world of one's spiritual dimension]. However, effective it may be on the conceptual level, an education that fails to help young amphibians to make the best of the inner and outer universes on the hither side of symbols is an inadequate education.24

At best then, the MIT approach can diminsh the negative effects of field idiosyncrasy by liberalizing the individual's symbol system. We are no longer saying "nothing but science" or "nothing but the arts," rather, we now say "nothing but that which can be rendered into mathematical, artistic, or verbal symbols." We are still dealing with an education that opens the doors to one world and, at the same time, makes others appear non-existent.

Perhaps it is this insufficiency--the fact that nowhere in the West does one find an education that puts one in touch with one's spiritual dimension--that has caused many to believe that modern life, based as it is on applied science and other forms of symbolic knowledge, has resulted in the "death of God." If we educate ourselves to relate to the world only in these terms, that which cannot be symbolized disappears altogther or becomes too amorphous to be noticed. Such concepts as God and the "lore which nature brings" inevitably suffer in either going by the wayside or being perverted into superficial idols.

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[24] Ibid., p. 282. See also AH, Proper Studies, op. cit., p. 33.

That which remains is all that is real. There is a danger present here, for the educational systems becomes efficient, mass-sanctifiers of the symbols they teach. In place of fetishism and primitive idolatries, minds are fortified with newly hallowed symbols of political ideology, science and business as the alpha and omega of modern reality. As Huxley points out, under this approach man cannot realize the full extent of his amphibious nature. It allows him to make fairly wide (if not wise) use of the physical and biological dimensions of his existence, but it does nothing to put him in touch with the world of infinite experience underlying those dimensions.

Here Huxley is faced with a predicament. Many if not most in the West remain dubious of the existence of this "infinite experience" for they have never personally come into contact with it. Huxley, on the other hand, has and reinforces his own visionary experiences by delving into the written reports of the mystics. This opens a great gap between himself and most of those to whom he speaks--a gap which he seeks to close by broadening out the concept of what education can do for a person. Yet if one does not believe in the end (achieving contact with "infinite experience") where is the incentive to practice the means?

Huxley, however, cannot except that no incentive exists. The problem is, he believes, one of apathy and

feelings of impotency rather than stark disbelief. Thus he persists. To achieve best results in educating a person to be aware of the spiritual dimension one should begin with the young child. Huxley believes that a child has the capacity to see the world without the overlays of culture, tradition and habit that, to a great extent, are the products of socialization. Too efficient socialization into a predominantly secular society constitutes a major roadblock to spiritual fulfillment. Thus, in part, one of Huxley's educational objectives is to have the adult retain the direct perceptual awareness of the child:

> Children are remarkable for their intelligence and ardour, for their curiosity, their intolerance of shams, the clarity and ruthlessness of their vision. . . . A child-like man is not a man whose development has been arrested; on the contrary, he is a man who has given himself a chance of continuing to develop long after most adults have muffled themselves in the cocoon of middle-aged habit and convention.25

This child-like man is in a better position to "feel" the world, as well as to relate to it through symbols. While

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[25]AH, Vulgarity in Literature (London: Chatto & Windus, 1930), p. 55. In some ways, Huxley himself exemplifies this state of being. His second wife, Laura, writes, "Aldous maintained throughout his life the best characteristics of youth: openness to ideas, an ability to let go of old habits, a desire to travel and learn firsthand from new cultures. It is perhaps this mental youthfulness which gave him physical resilience." This Timeless Moment op. cit., p. 28.

William Blake also struggled to retain the openness and "innocence" of youth. C. M. Bowra writes of him, "For him all human beings are in some sense and at some times the children of a divine father, but expereince destroys their innocence and makes them follow spectres and illusions. Blake does not write at a distance of time from memories of what

retaining the ability to adequately apply reason to the everyday world, he has the heightened awareness that allows one to bring the physiological and spiritual dimension into consciousness and sense a oneness with nature.[26] Yet he or she always knows that to make full use of consciousness, it is reason that must be kept under control through the limitation of the conditioning effects of knowledge.[27]

To prevent "mental arteriosclerosis" and "field idiosyncrasy" and remain potentially open to spritual insights, we must prevent knowledge from turning into "delinquent habits, sterotypes of perception, thought and feeling, [or] rituals of behaviour."[28] This is an approach that might be better understood by examining Timothy Leary's ideas in his article "How to Change Behavior."[29] Here Leary asserts that all behavior involves "learned games." Our upbringing, both in and out of school, inculcates in us a series of action-reactions patterns which correspond to society's rules and

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childhood once was, but from an insistent, present anguish at the ugly contrasts between the childlike and the experienced conceptions of reality." The Romantic Imagination, (N.Y.: Oxford Press, 1961), p. 30.

[26]AH, The Doors of Perception, op. cit., p. 62.

[27]AH, "Knowledge and Understanding," in Adonis and the Alphabet, op. cit., pp. 51-52.

[28]Ibid., p. 52.

[29]Published in Solomon, op. cit., p. 106.

and rituals for all normal occurances. In this way, according to Leary, our lives turn into a never-ending series of game situations. Because "cultural institutions encourage the delusion that the games of life are inevitable givens involving natural laws of behavior"[30] the patterns rigidify and, except under the most extreme circumstances (Leary notes two: the mystical and the psychedelic experience), are almost impossible to transcend. Leary feels that "this rigidity . . . now threatens the very survival of the human species itself."[31] Part of the solution, he suggests, can be found in the importance of psychedelics as an agent of "consciousness expansion." Huxley would go farther and devise ways in which the knowledge-giving institutions themselves would be responsible for making sure that children did not take the symbol systems of their society too seriously. Technical proficiency and practical common sense are necessary in dealing with the complexities of life but, especially in "personal reactions to ourselves and other human beings" we must unlearn our "game" patterns of behavior and "respond to each new challenge, not with our old conditioning, not in the light of a conceptual knowledge based on the memory of past and different events . . . but with a consciousness stripped naked and as though new born."[32]

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[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] AH, "Knowledge and Understanding," in Adonis and the Alphabet, op. cit., pp. 52-53.

If our educational systems and, beyond this, our whole way of raising our young could produce "child-like" adults, the results in practical terms would be manifold. Words would cease to have more emotion-pacted import than that for which they stand; symbols would no longer serve as barriers between men or between man and nature. In essence, man could learn to literally "get out of his own way," to not become the slave of his own education--a factor of particular importance in our modern world where, as we have seen, schooling tends to mask one's "amphibious" nature.

III - LEARNING UNDERSTANDING

Huxley has a tendency to pick up on the commonplace. For instance, in connection with his thoughts on expanding school curriculums so that education may become "amphibian" in nature, he makes a plea for "teaching" tolerance.

Huxley observes that Western civilization is a crowded one. Crowded, high-pressure living often leads the community to efforts at regulating differences through more or less rigid social custom. These in turn are often at odds with individual temperaments. The result is that those who find themselves not quite attuned to the rules and regulations become anxious or fearful, resentful or guilt-ridden.[33] Worse still, those who adjust to the accepted life-style tend to

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[33]See H. Osmond, "Psychopharmacology and the Manipulation of the Mind," in Solomon, op. cit., pp. 32-33.

label those who do not make the adjustment as deviants. There are two ways in which a society might deal with this situation. It could make the social restraints more flexible and broaden understanding, thereby reducing the number of deviants who appear dangerous to the community. The second option: it can simply not allow the deviants to survive or function freely.

However, to make a society as compatible as possible with our "amphibious nature" requires the path of tolerance. How then, Huxley asks himself, do we get men and women to not feel threatened by those who are physically and psychologically different from them? His answer is through "an education first of all in facts and in values--The fact of individual diversity and genetic uniqueness and the values of freedom, tolerance and mutual charity which are ethical collaries of these facts."[34]

Thus Huxley firmly believes that one can "teach" tolerance and that the course, so to speak, should be founded on a sound knowledge of the physical basis of differences. Here he turned to the work of Sheldon. He felt that Sheldon's correlation of body types and temperaments might allow educators to better design programs to fit the needs of different types of temperaments[35] and, as what causes differences

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[34]AH, Brave New World Revisited, op. cit., p. 145. Also see AH, "Do We Require Orgies?" in Yale Review, op. cit., p. 472.

[35]See AH, "Who Are You?" in Harpers Magazine, op. cit., pp. 520-521. Also Humphry Osmond, et al., "The Many Worlds of Time," op. cit., passim.

become better understood, to teach children why they differ. The result might be a more tolerant world:[36]

> When we realize that the people who are different from us did not get that way out of wickedness or perversity, when we understand that many of the profoundest of such differences are constitutional and that constitution cannot be changed, only made the best of, we may perhaps learn to be more tolerant, more intelligently charitable than we are at present.37

In this connection Huxley was particularly encouraged by the work of Humphry Osmond with psychedelics--work that seemed to supply evidence that these "mind-manifesting" agents can override even the high barriers of race and culture and make one aware of a spiritual brotherhood underlying physical and social differences. For example, one piece of

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[36]The understanding of differences can, with time, bear practical fruit. For example, a greater sensitivity to the way different physical and psychological attributes shape outlooks can help change the "channelling" of adolescents into college or non-college oriented courses from crude and imperfect guidance to more humane direction--direction towards what Castaneda's mentor, Don Juan, called "a path with a heart." "Does this path have a heart? If it does the path is good; if it doesn't it is of no use. . . . One makes for a joyful journey; as long as you follow it, you are one with it. The other will make you curse your life. One makes you strong; the other weakens you." The Teachings of Don Juan, op. cit., p. 76 (see also AH, Proper Studies, op. cit., p. 136). To translate this into Huxley's terminology, differences must be cherished and put to good use. This, of course, is what our present-day channellers claim to be doing. The environment of the schools, however, fails to encourage the investigation of a broad spectrum of interests; furthermore, the guidance that is offered is often tainted with value-loaded implications. Huxley, by comparison, most definitely rejects a learning system whose narrow concepts of winning and losing force many into paths that turn out to be heartless. He wants to be sure that square pegs, so to speak, no longer feel the necessity to jam themselves into round holes in order to comply with social pressures or some perverted definition of success (see AH, Proper Studies, op. cit., pp. 136-137). Being fully what one has the potential to be, that would be success.

[37]AH, "Who Are You?" op. cit., p. 520.

evidence that significantly impressed Huxley was Osmond's article "Peyote Night," wherein he recounts his experiences with members of the Native American Church.[38] The Indians of this church ingest peyote as a form of sacramental food during their night-long ceremonies. Osmond was one of a group of scientists invited to observe these ceremonies. He, alone among his collagues, was chosen to participate in the ceremony itself--to take the peyote with the Indians. He relates part of his experience in the following:

> When my friends returned, I felt that the Indians and I were one and that, for a little time, or more accurately a different sort of time, I was of their world rather than that of my colleagues, their conquerors. It was not simply that I realized they had a point of view I could respect, but that I felt in my bones as they felt in theirs. Looking back, I do not believe that this was an illusion, for I continued to be much more aware of their way of looking at things. But how could one prove such an opinion - without fine instruments for measuring a man's system of values.39

As Osmond notes, definitive proof is lacking, for "we are dealing with aspects of the human mind that are even more elusive and mysterious than the depths of space and time."[40] It should be noted, however, that this experience is not an isolated one. Thus Osmond states that "We have suggestive evidence that psychedelics, properly used, can increase

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[38] Humphry Osmond, "Peyote Night," in Psychedelics, op. cit., pp. 67-86. (All the members of the Native American Church are Canadian or American Indians.)

[39] Ibid., p. 76.

[40] Ibid., pp. 84-85.

communication and understanding between those who take them together, and this is not simply a drug induced delusion.[41]

Osmond's work with psychedelics came as something of a revelation to Huxley. Before he knew of the power and potential of psychedelic drugs he had to rely on the Sheldon studies which, while a great step forward, would probably not be, in themselves, sufficient for a successful educational approach to the teaching of understanding, tolerance and compassion. Huxley was inclined to feel that the world would have to await a time when "the science of psychology becomes more adequate" and could thus produce "a better technique of teaching men how to love one another."[42] (Again, Huxley's fear of science's effects on man is the reverse side of the coin from his hope for science.) As we will see, his reseasoning was not far from wrong; he never, however, considered such a prospect a mere ideal.[43]

Until the 1950's, the wait for adequate procedures to go beyond an intellectual approach to instruction in understanding seemed to be an indefinite one. In Ends and Means (1937) and The Perennial Philosophy (1944) Huxley

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[41] Ibid.

[42] AH, "Grace, Predestination and Salvation," in Hibbert Journal, op. cit., p. 201.

[43] AH, Ends and Means, op. cit., p. 333.

expounds the need and logic of tolerance and understanding. He tries to show that, among other things, freedom and compassion are necessary if we are to live in harmony with what he conceived to be the ultimate nature of reality. Yet the question remained, how to go beyond the intellectual approach? By the early 1950;s a potential tool useful in facilitating an emotional cultivation of compassion and tolerance seemed to Huxley to have appeared in the form of the psychedelic drugs. No one has yet pointed out the connection between Huxley's attitude toward psychedelics and his belief that education is a principle means to "amphibious" self-awareness. This is probably because few commentators on Huxley have personally viewed psychedelics as having potential educational value. Huxley believed, however, both from his reading and from his association with those doing research on these agents, that psychedelics have the ability to (at least temporarily) break down the ego-barriers so strongly reinforced by culture and personal differences, which do so much to prevent empathy and understanding between people.[44] In other words, they could

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[44] AH, The Doors of Perception, op. cit., p. 9. See also AH, "Culture and the Individual," in Solomon, op. cit., pp. 38-48 and Laura Huxley, This Timeless Moment, op. cit., pp. 131-142. Finally, on this subject of understanding we may cite Sidney Cohen's observation on the use of psychedelics, "Attitude measurements demonstrated a decreased dogmatism and a greater tolerance for opposing viewpoints. For at least a short period following the drug exposure, these attitude changes [often] persisted." The Beyond Within, op. cit., p. 43.

allow a person to feel at one with someone entirely different from himself.[45] In this way, Huxley became convinced, the use of these drugs under the proper guidance and circumstances could provide an insight which in turn would serve as the needed solid experiential basis for the teaching of understanding and tolerance.

Again, the same question raised in relation to achieving contact with "infinite experience" can be put here. Is there a will to learn understanding? Dr. Osmond asks just this question:

> If we wish it, this expansion of consciousness can be used to increase our awareness and sensitivity toward mankind. . . . But do we want to?[46]

This is, of course, the key question. Huxley was inclined to answer it in the negative for the present and he was obviously correct. For the future he was more optimistic. Perhaps this was less naiveté than faith that individuals do desire self-betterment and will find and use that which can safely aid them in this quest.

IV - LEARNING TO CLEANSE THE DOORS OF PERCEPTION

Despite this hope the history of man's interrelationships appears singularly black to Huxley and if the future

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[45] Huxley, who practices many of these techniques for almost an entire lifetime, was very much aware of this limitation. A tall spindley cerebrotonic, he once made the observation that he could not imagine what it would be like to be Sir John Falstaff or Joe Louis. See AH, The Doors of Perception, op. cit., p. 9.

[46] H. Osmond, "Psychopharmacology and the Manipulation of the Mind," in Solomon, op. cit., p. 36.

is to be any different man must correct his "inadequate" ways of perceiving his fellows:

> All mental processes depend upon perception. Inadequate perceiving results in poor thinking, inappropriate feeling, diminished interest in and enjoyment of life. Systematic training in perception should be an essential element in all education.[47]

"Inadequate" perception, then--overlayed with hatred, fear and anger--will result in correspondingly inadequate feelings and actions. One essentially feels anti-life in as much as the potential for love and understanding diminishes in favor of such feelings as greed, jealousy, malice, etc. This can be ascribed to many things: overpopulation, racism, ideological fanaticism, overly competitive economies and the like. In what is something of an over-simplification Huxley takes aim at one particular source, socially conditioned prejudices. Thus, the greatest source of "inadequate" perception, and prejudical "catalogues of likes and dislikes," is culture itself.[48] While culture gives

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[47] AH, "Education On The Nonverbal Level" in Daedalus, op. cit., p. 285. Humphry Osmond has also noted that "Our beliefs, what we assumed, as the Ames demonstrations in perception show (. . . the principle that what we are aware of is not determined entirely by the nature of what is out there or by our sensory processes, but that the assumptions we bring from past experience, because they have generally proved reliable, are involved in every perception we have.) greatly influence the world in which we live." "Clinical Effects of Psychotomimetic Agents," in Solomon, op. cit., p. 149.

[48] Huxley's concern is enhanced because he believes that curlturally inbred prejudices help bar the way to spiritual enlightenment. "Our kingdom must go before God's can come," he observes. There must be a moritification, not of nature , but of our own tendency to set up something of our own contriving in the place of nature. We have to get

the individual a valuable emotional and intellectual home, it can also act as a poison, nurturing narrow-mindedness and stupidity. This state of affairs led Huxley to point out the necessity for instruction in "cutting holes" in the verbal and symbolic "stockade" culture often builds around people. He explains it in this way:

> What can, and what should, the individual do to improve his ironically equivocal relationship with the culture in which he finds himself embedded? How can he continue to enjoy the benefits of culture without, at the same time, being stupefied or frenziedly intoxicated by its poisons? How can he become discriminately acculturated, rejecting what is silly or downright evil in his conditioning, holding fast fast to that which makes for humane and intelligent behavior?
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> A culture cannot be discriminatingly accepted, much less modified, except by persons who have seen through it--by persons who have cut holes in the confining stockade of verbalized symbols and so are able to look at the world and, by reflection, at themselves in a new and relatively unprejudiced way. Such persons are not merely born; they must also be made. But how?[49]

The answer to this question is, once more, education--and education that penetrates and transcends our symbol ridden perceptions. Such an educational endeavor entails two goals. First, one must teach people how to perceive social realities so that they are de-propagandized and de-stigmatized. One means to this end is to teach what Huxley

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rid of our catalogue of likes and dislikes, of the verbal patterns to which we expect reality to conform, of the fancies into which we retire, when the facts do not come up to our expectations." The Devils of Loudun, op. cit., p. 286.

[49] AH, "Culture and the Individual," in Solomon, op. cit., p. 40.

calls "applied semantics" or what might be referred to as a popular form of linguistic analysis.[50] Secondly, people must be educated in such a way as to be able to supplement verbal concepts of nature and humanity with direct, unmediated, awareness of events within and around them.[51] They must be able to feel the existence they live as well as symbolically conceptualize it. They must utilize, in the words of Plotinus, "that other kind of seeing which everyone has but few make use of."[52]

To achieve the first goal every person should be able to accurately handle (that is interpret) the words which, like the very air he or she breathes, form an atmosphere around them that can be cloudy or clear.[53] Thus an ability to understand clearly the symbolic nature of verbal labels must be part of one's educational heritage. In more technical terms what Huxley desires, is an assurance that the selecting process which goes on in the brain is guided

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[50]AH, Brave New World Revisited, op. cit., pp. 145-148.

[51]AH, The Doors of Perception, op. cit., p. 59, and "Culture and the Individual," op. cit., p. 42. See also Castaneda, Journey to Ixtlan, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

[52]Quoted in AH, "Culture and the Individual," op. cit., p. 44.

[53]This is not a new problem. Coleridge made the following statement which indicates that he knew the difference between reality and systems of words; "If to mint and to remember names delight thee, still arrange and classify and pore and pull to pieces, and peep into death to look for life, as monkeys put their hands behind a looking class!"

by a system of organization that is "not too erroneous as a view of the nature of things."[54] If someone says something with which we disagree, we should nonetheless be able to perceive him or her as an individual existing over and above the emotional connotations we affix to his words. And when words are spoken or written describing some situation near or far, we should have the capacity to discern the reality of that situation from the connotations of the descriptive phrases applied to it. As Huxley writes:

> Be totally aware of what you do and think and of the persons with whom you are in relationship, the events which prompt you at every moment of your existence. Be aware impartially, realistically, without judging, without reacting in terms of remembered words to your present cognitive reactions. If you do this, the memory will be emptied, knowledge and pseudo-knowledge will be relegated to their proper place. and you will have understanding - in other words, you will be in direct contact with reality at every instant.55

Huxley did not think training in "applied semantics" beyond present academic capacities. In fact, he firmly asserts that "all the intellectual materials for a sound education in the proper use of language--an education on every level from the kindergarten to the post-graduate school--are now available."[56] The implementation of such

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J. Appleyard, Colerdige's Philosophy of Literature (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1965), p. 232.

[54]AH, Brave New World Revisited, op. cit., p. 146.

[55]AH, "Knowledge and Understanding," in Adonis and the Alphabet, op. cit., pp. 70-71.

[56]AH, Brave New World Revisited, op. cit., p. 147.

an education would go a long way to producing a population of relative free-thinkers, and remove a great roadblock to amphibious awareness. However, it is equally obvious that the same curriculum would be inimical to the vested interests of some of the strongest institutions in the modern world. Huxley tells the story of the ill-fated Institute for Propaganda Analysis, established in the United States in 1937 to combat Nazi propaganda.[57] Under its auspices, several textbooks on the analysis of language were prepared for use in high schools and colleges. However, by the time they were ready to be put into use, the Americans themselves had abandoned neutrality in all but name and had no desire to teach their population techniques of propaganda analysis--they were now busy churning out their own. The objections to the Institute's work did not stop there. Even before neutrality "went by the boards," there were many who objected to it on grounds other than national security. Educators feared that such knowledge as provided by the Institute would make adolescents unduly cynical; clergymen feared its affects upon their Sunday sermons; advertisers saw brand loyality going out the window and, last but not least, the military saw it as the death knell to discipline. To all these groups, clear-sightedness was dangerous. By 1941, the Institute was

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[57] Ibid., pp. 147-148. Also see AH, "Culture and the Individual," in Solomon, op. cit., p. 45.

closed.

As Huxley points out, the fears expressed by such groups are not unfounded. A critical approach to symbol systems would do anything but reinforce belief in advertising and the pontifications of drill sergeants and politicians. Indeed, all too often these utterances would be displayed as sheer nonsense. What can one say of the prospects for democracy among a population that uncritically swallows too much of this rubbish for too long? On the other hand, it is not to be understood that what Huxley desires is a world of skeptics:

> The problem, once more, is to find the happy mean. Individuals must be suggestible enough to be willing and able to make their socity work, but not so suggestible as to fall helplessly under the spell of professional mind-manipulators.58

Thus, he aims for a population of relatively clear-sighted individuals. This population can be evolved if a technqiue such as "applied semantics" is practiced in conjunction with an education that instills in people a general set of values "based upon a solid foundation of facts."[59] He is speaking of "pro-human" and "pro-life" criterion here: an understanding of human diversity, of the need for freedom, charity, love, compassion and understanding--criterion by which every individual should be able to judge all statements and exhortations of whatever nature.

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[58]AH, Brave New World Revisited, op. cit., p. 148.

[59]Ibid., p. 149.

The achievement of the second goal, direct unmediated awareness of events, is facilitated by the attainment of the first. According to Huxley, an escape from the tyranny of language not only allows one to see through the various types of propaganda that so often poison interpersonal relations, but it also sets up conditions which allow one to more easily escape the mundane and limited awareness which characterizes our relationship with nature.

Taking as a point of comparison his own visionary psychedelic experiences Huxley believes that in normal waking consciousness the objects around us appear strictly finite, the "insulated embodiments of verbal labels."[60] How can we overcome such finite perception and "break the habit of automatically imposing our prejudices upon immediate experience?" The answer, "by the practice of pure receptivity and mental silence [that is the art of contemplation as practiced in Eastern cultures]. These will . . . make possible the emergence of other than normal forms of consciousness--aesthetic consciousness, visionary consciousness, mystical consciousness."[61] And, the judicious use of psychedelic agents.

Huxley parallels William Blake in asserting that if we cease symbolizing even for a moment, the "doors of

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[60] AH, "Culture and the Individual," in Solomon, op. cit., p. 42.

[61] Ibid.

perception" become clearer, and all existence appears to us in its naked essence. That which we perceive might then serve as a catalyst for our enlightenment:

> Perceived not as a botanical speciment, not as the analysed and labeled illustration of a pre-existent symbol system, but as a nameless, unique event, in which all the beauty and the mystery of existence are manifest, a flower can become the means to enlightenment. And what is true of a flower is true, needless to say, of any other event in the inner or outer world . . . to which we choose to pay attention in a state of wise passiveness.62

As to ends, if not means, one can see a close parallel between this process of "cleansing the doors of perception" and the experiences of Carlos Castaneda, a California university professor of anthropology who apprenticed himself to a Mexican Yaqui sorcerer by the name of Don Juan. The aim of Castaneda's Indian teacher was to cause him to "see" the world or, in other words, "stop" seeing the world in terms of everyday conditioned perceptions. He explained to Castaneda that "the world is such-and-such or so-and-so only because we tell ourselves that that is the way it is. If we stop telling ourselves that

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62AH, "Education on a Nonverbal Level," in Daedalus, op. cit., p. 287. Achievement of this state of penetrating clarity is one that William Blake valued highly and most likely himself shared. That he wished it for all men is implied in his famous quote, "the notion that man has a body distinct from his soul is to be expunged; this I shall do by printing in the infernal method, by corrosives . . . melting apparent surfaces away, and displaying the infinite world which is hid.

"If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite.

"For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern." "The Marriage of Heaven

the world is so-and-so, the world will stop being so-and-so."[63] Having done this, one realizes that what one ordinarily sees of the world is certainly not all that there is. "There is much more to the world, so much more, in fact, that it is endless. So when you're trying to figure it out, all your really doing is trying to make the world familiar."[64] As it is with Huxley, so it is with Castaneda and Don Juan--to teach oneself not to mistake the everyday world for the totality of reality is the first and biggest step in suspending cultural prejudices. With such a suspension, one's normal everyday existence begins to change, the doors of perception become "cleansed," and one eventually comes into "immediate" contact with the persons and things about one.

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and Hell," in Edwin J. Ellis, ed., The Poetical Works of William Blake, I, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1906), p. 247.

Huxley believes that the "cleansing" of the "doors of perception" was so important (and also so practical a possibility) that he once proposed to Alan Watts the establishment of a graduate school which would "examine the ways in which persons brought up within a given linguistic system (in other words a given thought and feeling system) can best be helped to establish contact with that part of the Mind which lies beyond language." That is, "what are the best techniques for getting out of one's own light and collaborating with the not self!" Letters, Oct. 12, 1952. pp. 647-658. As Bedford tells us, Huxley spent much time trying to induce different money-giving institutions such as the Ford foundation to back such research. See Bedford, II, op. cit., p. 148.

[63]Carlos Castaneda, A Separate Reality (N.Y.: Pocket Books, 1971), p. 219.

[64]Carlos Castaneda, Journey to Ixtlan (N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, 1972), pp. 167-168.

The techniques, that is the means that Don Juan used to achieve this goal are not the contemplative ones espoused by Huxley. They are also not the supportive type of drug sessions Huxley would approve. Rather, Don Juan's means constituted a series of psychedelic drug sessions administered to Castaneda (an urbanized, scholarly, scientific mind) in an environment that was completely alien to him (the environment of an Indian shaman) and for which he was in no way prepared. Huxley's means would no doubt result in a much smoother and easier period of perceptual transition than the culture shocks Castaneda experienced. However, both Huxley and Don Juan realized that in the effort to desancitfy the symbol systems which most people take for both social and natural reality, the role of consciousness changing drugs can be of key importance.[65]

As noted, Huxley wanted to train "child-like" men--adults who could "sit down in front of the facts like a child."[66] If "perceptual" educators train children in the

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[65]In an interview with Castaneda entitled "Sorcerer's Apprentice, A Conversation with Carlos Castaneda," appearing in the December, 1972 issue of Psychology Today, Castaneda says, "I have never taken LSD, but what I gather from Don Juan's teachings is that psychotrophics are used to stop the flow of ordinary interpretations, to enhance contradictions . . . and to shatter certainty. But the drugs alone do not allow you to stop the world. To do that you need an alternative description of the world." As we shall see such an "alternative description" Huxley tries to supply through mysticism.

[66]The words are those of T. H. Huxley as quoted in Osmond, "Clinical Effects of Psychotomimetic Agents," in Solomon, op. cit., p. 149.

arts of "pure receptivity" and "applied linguistics" those children can be brought to retain a significant portion of their unbiased perception in adult life. Psychedelics can help these young people in making the most of this capacity by infinitely deepening perceptual sensitivity in but a short period of time.[67] What of those, however, who as adults have, in most cases, already succumbed to the negative effects of cultural conditioning? After memories and learned expectations cast the mold within which perceptions are interpreted, it is most difficult to change parameters. This, in part, explains the extended length of time taken by therapeutic approaches such as psychoanalysis. However, it has been repeatedly demonstrated that properly administered psychedelic agents can allow man to escape conditioned perception.[68] For the adults, those who make policy, carry it out or support it, such

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[67]AH, Island, op. cit., pp. 158-170. Also Letters, AH. to Humphry Osmond, April 10, 1953 where he writes, "Is it too much to hope that a system of education may some day be devised, which shall give results, in terms of human development, commensurate with the time, money, energy and devotion expended? In such a system of education it may be that mescaline or some other chemical substance may play a part by making it possible for young people to "taste and see" what they have learned about at second hand, or directly but at a lower level of intensity, in the writings of the religious, or the works of poets, painters and musicians." Op. cit., p. 669. To see how this can work with older people as well see Humphry Osmond, et al., Psychedelics, op. cit., p. 473.

[68]Osmond, "Clinical Effects of Psychotomimetic Agents," in Solomon, op. cit., p. 149. Also see, Letters, AH to Dr. H. Fabing, Jan. 20, 1956, op. cit., pp. 785-786.

escapes are potentially equal to that "cutting holes in cultural fences" Huxley advocates:

> Unprecently rapid technological and demographic changes are steadily increasing the dangers by which we are surrounded. . . . Always desirable, widespread training in the art of cutting holes in cultural fences is now the most urgent of necessities. Can such a training be speeded up and made more effective by a judicious use of the physically harmless psychedelics now available? On the basis of personal experience and the published evidence I believe it can.[69]

Again, an old objection must be raised. When dealing with the subject of political reform we noted that Huxley realized that those closest to power were, by the nature of their vested interests, least capable of acting independent of the prejudices which upheld those interests (see pages 83-84). The same is probably true of those who have vested interests in perceiving the world in ways Huxley disapproves of. These same vested interests are what caused so many people to take fright at the indiscriminate use of consciousness changing agents by many American youth in the 1960's. They would also almost surely prevent such people from following Huxley's advice in this matter.

This leads us to yet another problem. It is most likely true that <u>if</u> educational innovations in the shaping of perceptions through the use of drugs can be achieved people would soon be seeing the world, themselves and

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[69] AH, "Culture and the Individual," in Solomon, op cit., p. 47.

others in a vastly different--no doubt better--light than at present.[70] This is Huxley's hope. He does not, however, deal with many of the specifics of the educational use of psychedelics. For instance, he does not talk of who will administer them, who will guide the experiences and who will guard against ill-effects. Most of all he does not stipulate who will be entrusted with preparing the student for such an experience. Thus, a legitimate criticism of Huxley is that he never really goes into the problem of safeguards. The closest he comes to it is in Island where he attempts to show that courses in understanding and unmediated experience starting at a young age can, with the help of the eventual use of psychedelics, lead to more self-aware and humane attitudes when reinforced by follow-up procedures throughout one's post-school life. It would seem, however, that there must always be an administrator. Here, so to speak, is the rub. On Pala--Huxley's idealistic community in Island--the administrators are, of course, always well-meaning and themselves self-aware people. Can we say the same for the available administrators

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[70] See AH, Island, op. cit., pp. 158-170 and 175-190. Also Letters, AH to Miss Hepworth and Mr. Green, 1942, where he writes, "Given mysticism and such psycho-physical techniques as the Bates method and the Alexander method, it is possible to conceive of a totally new kind of education starting at the level of bodily function and going up to the heights of spirit. . . . It would be an education in the art of conforming to the nature of things, to "Tao" in all its aspects." Op. Cit., pp. 473-474.

in the present Western society, plagued as it is with what Huxley considers dehumanizing ways of perceiving? The answer must be an emphatic no.

IV - LEARNING TO GET OUT OF ONE'S OWN WAY

A word must be said here about the use of the "self"--an important subject to Huxley due to his own success in overcoming a series of physical dysfunctions. Huxley reasoned that if understanding and "correct" perception are to be learned, the organism as a whole must be fully operative, working with complete harmony among all its parts. As he points out:

> In practice there is all the difference in the world between two intrinsically similar intelligences, one of which happens to be connected with a mental and bodily organism that is healthy, active, and well trained, the other with an ill-trained, sickly, and inactive organism.71

From a near-blind and neurotic state he had managed by becoming "well trained" to establish relative harmony among his physical parts. He became convinced, in turn, that this had established a necessary prerequisite state for his own positive approach to life. One can note other evidence that a harmonic physical state is important to one's mental performance. Consider, for instance, the times at which many people are most creative. These are rarely periods when the organism is strained or distracted.

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[71] AH, Proper Studies, op. cit., pp. 34-35.

Rather, creativity usually expresses itself best in an organism that is functioning smoothly--at east but alert.[72] This is applicable to almost all activities from sports to painting, from mathematics to writing sonnets.[73]

While this might at first appear to be merely common sense, it in fact represents a little-practiced truism. We think that we only relate to our surroundings with our heads; however, physiologists have shown that this is far from the whole story. We respond to the world not only with our minds, but also with our glands, muscles, skin and the like.[74] To be most creative, as well as most

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[72]We often remark that our best ideas seem to just "come to us". Often, for instance, this happens just before sleep. The period immediately prior to sleep is one when we are least apt to be rigidly "symbolizing" our situation, and most likely to have slipped into a state akin to passive receptivity. If we can learn to enter this state at will, then we will effect what Huxley calls collaboration with the "not-self"--that is, those various non-conscious elements of one's being. See AH, "Education on a Nonverbal Level," op. cit., p. 288 and AH, "Variations on a Philosopher," in Themes and Variations, op. cit., p. 148.

[73]Ibid., here Huxley writes, "In all life's workings above the physiological the results we desire are obtained only when we contrive to combine will with effortlessness, action with relaxation. Soul and body must let go; for only thus can they make themselves receptive to animal graces from the realms of the instinctive and the physiological; to intellectual and imaginative graces from the lower levels of the psyche, and to spiritual graces, whose source is beyond those depths in the divine immanence."

[74]AH, "Meditation on El Greco," in Music at Night, op. cit., pp. 65-66.

perceptive and "in touch" with reality, we must accept this relating function of our bodies as real and legitimate. "The blood and the flesh are there," said Huxley, "and in certain respects they are wiser than the intellect."[75]

On the other hand, our minds are the very key to our human status. Animal body and human mind have always seemed to be at war with each other, and according to Descartes, are almost completely separate entities. Huxley considered this separation to be false, and insisted that "the whole art of life is making the best of both" the mind and the body--bringing them into unison,[76] and thus recognizing in practice man's amphibious nature. A mere intellectual acceptance of this need, however, is insufficient to get one "into tune;" the mind-body must be educated to be less self-frustrating.[77] To do so is what Huxley refers to as "getting out of one's own way."

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[75]AH quoted in Sybille Bedford, Aldous Huxley, I, op. cit., p. 211.

[76]Ibid., Also see Huxley essay "Puritan" wherein as early as 1931 he wrote, "If humanity is to be saved there must be reforms, not merely in the social and economic spheres, but also within the individual psyche. . . In order to effect this bringing together [of the body and the intellect] certain barriers must be broken down. They are strong barriers; for the conscious mind has taken extraordinary precautions to keep itself out of contact with the body and its instincts. The spirit refuses to be livingly aware of the animal man." in Music at Night, (Chatto and Windus, 1931), p. 81.

[77]In one sense we must learn to let the body "do its own thing" in as much as we must prevent the mind, with its neurotic inhibitions and psychosomatic quirks, from trespassing on physiological preserves. In another sense we

In this context Huxley felt that the Alexander method mentioned in Chapter I might be put to practical use. He believed that this practice of posture and muscle control could allow one to achieve awareness of Kinesthetic muscle sense, and reimpose the cooperative alignment of mind and body most conducive to over-all well being. Indeed, he was convinced that he himself achieved just such a benefit from the practice of this technique. If we instruct a person, Huxley reasoned, to be aware of his body in the way the Alexander method allowed for, and, through this enhanced awareness, to use it "correctly," then that person's mental outlook will be altered for the better. If one feels better, one perceives better and if one preceives the world in a more congenial light, one acts better.[78] With this in mind John Dewey wrote of the Alexander method (circa 1918):

> The method is . . . one of constructive education. Its proper field of application is with the young, with the growing generation, in order that they may come to possess as early as possible in life a correct standard of sensory appreciation and self-judgment. When once a resonably adequate part of a new generation has become properly co-ordinated, we shall have assurance for the first time that men and women in the future will be able to stand on their feet, equipped with satisfactory psycho-physical equilibrium,

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must learn to better control body functions (an area in which Bio-Feedback techniques show much promise) and to avoid the misues of the body in such a way as to almost insure states of mind clouded by irritability, anxiety and a generally pessimistic outlook.

[78]See AH, "The Oddest Science," in Collected Essays, op. cit., p. 322.

> to meet with readiness, confidence and happiness instead of with fear, confusion, and discontent, the buffetings and contingencies of their surroundings.79

As Huxley points out, the workings of the mind-body must not be forced to conform to one standard of one world (which he sees happening in both the East and the West) when in fact it partakes of many.[80] Just as field-idiosyncrasy makes for an unrealistically narrow, and thus dangerously ill-shaped world, so lack of recognition of the legitimacy of both body and mind can ill-fit one to a healthy, "amphibious" life. Both the body and the mind must give the other its due, so to speak, and stay out of the other's way in order that both may work harmoniously. This too can and should be taught.

V - A FURTHER WORD ON THE ROLE OF DRUGS

The most striking aspect of Huxley's approach to education is his advocacy of the judicious use of mind altering agents. Psychedelic drugs, like other aspects of applied science, constitute tools, in themselves of neutral value. It is how such substances are administered and the sort of mind experiencing them that will determine

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[79] John Dewey, Preface to the works of F. M. Alexander, reprinted in Edward Maisel, ed., The Alexander Technique (N.Y.: University Books, 1970), p. 179.

[80] See Sybille Bedford, I, op. cit., p. 211.

their results.[80a] Huxley once observed that "chemically induced euphoria could easily become a threat to individual liberty[81] and in Brave New World he pictures just this situation. However, if used for the purposes outlined in this chapter, they could "easily be liberty's strongest bulwark."[82] Huxley believes that, stimulating and broadening perception and insight, psychedelics can, when used in combination with progressive programs of educational reform, produce a truly superior and freer human being:

> Generalized intelligence and mental alertness are the most powerful enemies of dictatorship and at the same time the basic conditions of effective democracy. Even in the democratic West we could do with a bit of psychic energizing. Between them, education and pharmacology may do something to offset the effects of that deterioration of our biological material to which geneticists have frequently called attention.83

[80a] See Chapter IV for a discussion of the need for pre-screening those taking these drugs.

[81] AH, "Drugs that Shape Men's Minds," in Collected Essays, op. cit., p. 342.

[82] Ibid. The if, here, is important. As we have seen in the case of Humphry Osmond's experience and will further see in Chapter IV, there is evidence that in individual cases, or those involving relatively small groups, that psychedelics have helped produce the results Huxley claimed for them. Very little systematic large scale experimentation has occurred on these aspects of mind-manifesting agents, however, because of their present illegal status.

[83] Ibid., p. 343. See also p. 342 where Huxley writes, "most of us function at [a mental level] about 15% of capacity. How can we step up our mentally low efficiency? Two methods are available--the educational and the biochemical. We can take adults and children as they are and give them a much better training than we are giving them now. Or, by

Don Juan refers to the psychedelic mushroom which he uses as his "ally"--"a power capable of transporting a man beyond the boundaries of [his everyday self]; that is, an allay was a power that allowed one to transcend the realm of ordinary reality."[84] In the same sense, Huxley wished education as a whole--verbal, non-verbal, scientific, physical, etc.--to become mankind's "ally" and take its place as a primary means to full "amphibiousness." Within this context, psychedelics would play the role of a quick and safe eye-opener, allowing the pupil to come to total awareness of the reality behind the otherwise incompletely descriptive words and symbols of the teacher.[85] In short, the introduction of psychedelics into a progressive educational structure helps transform that structure into a potential path to enlightenment.

> To be enlightened is to be aware, always, of total reality in its immanent otherness-to be aware of it and yet to remain in a condition to survive as an animal, to think and feel as a human being, to resort whenever expedient to systematic reasoning. Our goal is to discover that we have always been where we ought to be. Unhappily we make the task exceedingly difficult for ourselves. Meanwhile, however, there are gratuitous graces in the form of partial and

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appropriate biochemical methods, we can transform them into suprerior individuals. If these superior individuals are given a superior education, the results will be revolutionary. They will be startling even if we continue to subject them to the rather poor educational methods in vogue."

[84]Carlos Castaneda, The Teachings of Don Juan, op. cit., pp. 150-151.

[85]AH, Island, op. cit., pp. 158-170 and Letters, AH to H. Osmond, April 10, 1953, op. cit., p. 669.

> fleetings realizations. Under a more realistic, a less exclusively verbal system of education than ours, every angel (in Blake's sense of that word) would be permitted as a sabbatical treat, would be urged and even, if necessary, compelled to take an occasional trip through some chemical Door in the Wall into the world of transcendental experience.86

With the help of psychedelics, then, present day education is hopefully transformed from a rather negative conditioning process into a stimulating and liberating experience--one that not only teaches a person how to cope with the everyday world but positively channels his "instinctive" urge to self-transcendence.

VI

It becomes clear that despite Huxley's dislike of mass-education and his complaints of its overly symbolic nature his main criticism of Western schools is not that they teach the wrong things (for he certainly does not want to see verbal and mathematical skills ignored) so much as the fact that they do not teach all of the right things. They teach one to read, write, and calculate but not to be fully self-aware.

In 1929 Huxley expressed the following opinion: "the most we can hope to do is to train every individual to realize all his potentials and become completely himself."[87]

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[86]AH, The Doors of Perception, op. cit., pp. 63-64. See also Letters, AH to H. Osmond, Ap. 10, 1953, op. cit., p. 669.

[87]AH, Proper Studies, op. cit., p. 99.

By the 1950's he had formulated the supplementary curriculums discussed above through the addition of which he hoped education could help achieve this goal. Furthermore, for education to do so was for it to help produce superior, "better" human beings. Thus, education that fit man's "amphibious" nature was a moral action; a process to be equated with mental and physical liberation.

In Huxley's worldview, however, education is, ultimately, something more; that is, the preparatory step to spiritual awareness. It should be a many-faceted instrument by which the individual can be brought to an appreciation of, and potential capacity for, the visionary and mystical experience that have, until now, been the privilege of but a few. Those educational techniques that make one aware of social dynamics and the natural world in and around one accomplish a part of the necessary job. They establish a perceptual environment that must be consumated by full self-discovery. Only upon such consumation can one truly be Huxley's well-rounded amphibian--be at once vitally alive as flesh and blood, while still approaching what he referred to as unity with the divine Ground of all being.

Huxley knew that the world was not populated with hermits and monks, but rather was full of people preoccupied with the material concerns of staying alive, or,

if more fortunate, the business of "success." How then would it be possible to become a visionary or mystic as well as an athlete, scientist or school teacher as the case may be? Huxley considers this problem as early as 1942.[88] What he wishes to demonstrate is that, ultimately, there are no contradictions between full psycho-physical development and total spiritual awareness if all the worlds of man are in their proper and natural harmony. He reflects this desire when he writes, "Salvation is complete only when time, body and manifoldness are accepted and transfigured through being apprehended in their realtion to eternity."[89]

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[88] Letters, AH to Miss Hepworth and Mr. Green, 1942, op. cit., pp. 473-474.

[89] AH, "Variations on a Philosopher," in Themes and Variations, op. cit., p. 139.

CHAPTER IV

PSYCHEDELICS AND MYSTICISM

I

Man's use of mind-altering substances is age-old. Natural psychedelic agents have been used throughout human history for such things as conjuring up spirits, prophesying, the inducing of trance states, bringing about unity with a deity, etc. On reflection, this early and prolonged use is hardly surprising. Our ancestors were hunters and foragers. They did not have an animal's instincts when it came to picking the proper foods. Over the centuries they had to find, by trial and error, what would sustain them and what would poison them. In the process every root and berry that they came upon must have been tried. This pursuit, no doubt, resulted in more than one fatal or magnificently revealing surprise. Aldous Huxley has aptly described this history as man "nibbling his way down the millenia."[1]

This "nibbling" at psychedelic substances was carried out by the Vedic practitioners of ancient northern India,[2] by

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[1] Quoted in H. Osmond, "Philosophical Aspects of Psychedelics," in Internationale Zeitschrift fur Klinische Pharmaokolgie, Therapie und Toxikologie, V (1, 1971), p. 59.

[2] On soma see R. G. Wasson, Soma: Divine Mushroom of Immortality (N.Y.: Harcourt, 1969).

the ancient Greeks,[3] by the Indian Empires of Central and South America,[4] throughout north and central Africa,[5] and among the Siberian tribes.[6] Christian Europe too has known the use of psychedelic substances for many centuries although here they were originally viewed much more negatively than in most other places and times.[7] The fact that the ancient Vikings were thought to have used the psychedelic "fly agaric" mushroom to stoke their courage upon going into battle[8]

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[3]See George Mylonas, Eleusis and the Eleusian Mysteries (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1961), 284 and also W. H. Clark, "The Psychedelics and Religion," in Osmond and Aaronson, Op. cit., 182. John Allegro also comments on the use of psychedelic mushrooms by Bacchic revellers in The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross (London: Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd., pp. 156-157.

[4]See R. G. Wasson, "The Hallucinogenci Fungi of Mexico," in Psychedelic Review, I (1963) pp. 27-42.

[5]See David Ebin, ed., The Drug Experience, Evergreen Black Cat Book (N.Y.: Grove Press, 1961), p. 104.

[6]See R. G. Wasson, Mushrooms, Russia and History (N.Y.: Pantheon Books, 1957), passim. Also Wasson, "The Hallucinogenic Mushroom of Mexico", in Ebin, Op. cit., 323.

[7]Speculating on why some peoples have embraced and others feared consciousness-altering agents, Wasson puts forth the following hypothesis: "Slowly it dawned on us [Wasson and his wife] that the peoples of Europe were divided ethnomycologically into two groups. . . . ., the 'mycophiles' and the 'mycophobes,' words that we coined. The objective evidence supporting this hypothesis was reinforced by myriad clues to be found in phisiology and folklore. A bold surmise gradually gripped us: perhaps our remote ancestors had worshipped the mushroom. This would explain our evidence, for that which is worshipped is both adored and feared." Ibid., 322.

[8]See Psychedelics, op. cit., pp. 8-9. (It should be noted that R. G. Wasson dissents from the opinion that the Vikings used a psychedelic plant drug. See Soma: Divine Mushroom of Immortality, op. cit., pp. 156-157. It is interesting

must not have endeared such a plant drug to their Christian victims on the continent. The modern-day synthesized drug LSD, is chemcially closely related to ergot, a fungus sometimes found in blighted rye. Some authorities now believe this LSD-like, naturally occurring substance may have been responsible (in the form of infected rye bread) for the outbreaks of "dancing mania" which first occurred in Aix-la-Chappelle in 1374 following the Black Death.[9]

The most common European usage of consciousness-changing drugs (not all of which, in this case, can be defined as psychedelics) was among witches. Their employment was especially common during the years 1450 to 1750. The substances which seem to have been most popular at witches' sabbaths were bufotenin (related to serotonin and first obtained from toad skins), scopolamine, and henbane. In addition, solanaceae drugs contained in plants such as mandragora, deadly nightshade, and the thornapple were used.[10] These agents were made into brews or ointments which were then drunk or rubbed over the skin. The results were usually

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to note that the same mushroom was used by certain indo-European tribes to produce states of calm euphoria. This lends credence to the theory that the expectations and state of mind with which one approaches such a drug has much to do with the results when using it.

[9]J. A. C. Brown, Techniques of Persuasion (Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin Books Ltd., 1969), 211-212.

[10]See Sidney Cohen, The Drug Dilemma (N.Y.: Mc-Graw-Hill, 1969), pp. 63-65. Witches in Eastern Europe often used psychedelic mushroom amanita muscaria.

disorientation and the inducement of dreams which often included imagery of flying (whence, possibly, comes the popular imagery of the flying broomstick), intercourse with incubi and succubi, and other orgiastic revelings. According to R. Masters and J. Houston in Varieties of Psychedelic Experience, these drug-induced hallucinations were at times so realistic and vivid that witches often confessed to acts they had merely dreamt of committing but were convinced had in fact taken place.[11]

By the 19th century Europe had grown accustomed enough to psychedelic substances and even the more dangerous and addictive non-psychedelic agents such as opium to take their widespread use in stride. In Britain during this period opium was a particularly favored drug.[12] It was either taken as tablets or mixed with alcohol in a liquid form known as Laudanum. As such, and especially in tablet form, it could easily be purchased at pharmacies in almost any town. Its

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[11] (N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), p. 252. Also see B. H. Golightly and P. G. Stafford, LSD-The Problem Solving Psychedelic (N.Y.: Award Books, 1967), pp. 162 and 239.

[12] Humphry Osmond tells us in "Psychopharmacology . . . The Manipulation of the mind," that "apart from alcohol, opium was the best mind changer available. It played some part in the literary and philosophical development of the early 19th century, being a combination of pain killer, tranquilizer and, in an uncertain manner, vision inducing agent." I Problemi Di Ulisse, VI, April, 1961 (Anno. XIV), Mimeographed reprint, p. 1. Baudelaire also describes the widespread use of opium in Britain in Artificial Paradise, op. cit., p. 87. For Coleridge's comment on this same use, see his letter of Sept. 19, 1808 to T. G. Street in Leslie Griggs, ed. Collected Works of S. T. Coleridge, III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), pp. 125-126.

cost was just slightly above that of gin. Contributing to its common use was the fact that it was the catchall drug of the medical profession, in a sense the 19th century version of aspirin. Doctors prescribed it for all manner of illnesses including numerous complaints which, some as often as not, being withdrawal symptoms from opium addiction acquired from earlier medicinal use of the drug.[13]

In France the use of the mild psychedelic hashish was particularly popular among the artists and writers living in Paris. Its popularity seems to owe its origin to Jacques Joseph Moreau. Moreau was a doctor at the Hospital de Bictre, where he was experimenting with hashish and Datura Stramonium (a stronger psychedelic substance derived from Jimson weed) in the treatment of the mentally ill. It was Moreau who introduced hashish to his friend, Theophile Gautier and it was Gautier, in his turn, who was active in "Le Club des Hashischins," frequented by Baudelaire among others.

In the 20th century psychedelics and various addictive "hard" drugs have been lumped together in the mind of the general public and presently both have fallen into disfavor. The use of other drugs, (barbiturates, amphetamines, alcohol, etc.) however, to alter one's state of mind--a function, according to Huxley of (among other things) man's general

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[13]See Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt, Children in English Society, II (Toronto: Toronto Univ. Press, 1973), p. 406. Also Alethea Hayter, Opium and the Romantic Imagination (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1968), pp. 19-35.

drive to seek out self-transcendence--has not. In the late 1940's and 1950's Marihuana was used by "beatniks" and "bohemian" minorities in the large urban centers of the United States. By the 1960's this phenomenon of uncontrolled use of psychedelic agents, now including more powerful drugs such as mescaline and LSD (most often of bootleg manufacture and thus of questionable purity) had spread out to include a relatively large number of youth of all classes. It was at this point that the government stepped in and made possession of these substances illegal.

For present purposes what is most significant is that no matter the time or place, the most consistent interpretation of that state of altered consciousness produced by psychedelic agents has been a religious one. This was certainly the interpretation of Greeks, Vedic practitioners, Indians and, in their negative way, many Europeans. Perhaps the most well known modern intellectual to advance the idea that chemicals inhaled or ingested could facilitate religious states of consciousness was William James. After inhaling nitrous oxide (better known as laughing gas, the consciousness-altering agent most readily available to him), James became convinced that a "requisite stimulus" was all that was required to transport one out of normal consciousness into other "potential forms of consciousness entirely different." He concludes that these states cannot be ignored or dismissed for "no account of the universe in its totality can be final

which leaves these forms of consciousness disregarded."[14]

James was at one point persuaded by the doctor-novelist Wier Mitchell, himself an experimenter with consciousness-altering agents, to try peyote, which he did in the hope of achieving a mystical state. However, he had a negative reaction; he got sick to his stomach. In a letter to his brother Henry, dated June 11, 1896, he concluded that, as far as peyote went, "I will take the visions on trust."[15]

Why have men tended to give religious import to drugs and practices that produce non-ordinary states of consciousness? Several hypotheses have been put forward. For instance, many feel that psychedelic plants, when first ingested by our ancestors, sparked in them the idea of God. Wasson, for example, offers the following suggestion:

> There must have been a time when man . . . first grasped . . . the awe that goes with the idea of God. Perhaps these ideas came to him unaided, by the light of his dawning intelligence. I suggest to you that, as our own most primitive ancestors foraged for their food, they must have come upon our psychotropic mushrooms, or perhaps other plants possessing the same property, and eaten them, and known the miracle of awe in the presence of God. . . . It must have been the mightly springboard for primitive man's imagination.16

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[14]Williams James, Varieties of Religious Experience (N.Y.: Modern Library, 1902), pp. 378-379.

[15]The Letters of William James, ed. by Henry James (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1926), II, 37.

[16]Wasson, "The Hallucinogenic Mushroom of Mexico," in Ebin, Op. cit., 320.

No doubt there are many who would be sceptical of this interpretation. The Judeo-Christian concept of an omnipotent and omniscent personal God does not lend itself to a theory placing the origin of religion among the fibers of a fungus. There is, however, a certain logic to Wasson's claim. Mary Bernard, in an article on "The God in the Flower-pot" points out that,

> When we consider the origins of the mythologies and cults related to drug plants, we should surely ask ourselves which, after all, was most likely to happen first: the spontaneously generalized idea of an after life in which the disembodied soul, liberated from the restrictions of time and space, experiences eternal bliss, or the accidential discovery of hallucinogenic plants that give a sense of euphoria, dislocate the center of consciousness, and distort time and space, making them balloon outward in greatly expanded vistas?17

Anthropologists and writers on science are not the only ones to find merit in such a theory. The philosopher Henri Bergson in his book Two Sources of Morality and Religion, has recognized the religious role in both ancient and modern times of the "divine rapture" produced by intoxicating drinks.[18] Whether these hypotheses come close to the truth or not will probably never be known. As will be seen, however, the religious experience which is sometimes possible through the use of psychedelics bears marked resemblence to the classical mystical experience that, according

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[17] In the American Scholar (Autumn, 1963), XXXII, pp. 584-586.

[18] Trans. by R. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton (London: Macmillan & Co., 1935), p. 218.

to orthodox Catholicism, comes to the individual as a gratuitous grace of God.

II

Initially Aldous Hulxey was drawn to psychedelics as he was drawn to all of science's new interests--out of curiosity and wonder. There was, however, a personal motive that enhanced his curiosity. From his mid-twenties onward he had sought ways of overcoming, of transcending his strong intellectual orientation towards the world and his own person. He had searched out methods, as his enthusiasm for the Alexander technique and Eastern forms of meditation testify, to help him suspend analysis and establish immediate contact with his own physical self, his environment and that dimension of human essence which he believed to lie beyond all analysis--the spirit.

This personal yearning for self-transcendence had led him to a serious interest in mysticism and it was his intuitive favoring of the mystic's way of expressing his religious needs (that is, ultimately, unhindered by doctrine or the dictates of a hierarchal church organization) that caused him to seek out such an experience for himself. For Huxley, then, the need for self-transcendence ultimately leads to mysticism.

In 1915, at twenty-one years of age, Aldous Huxley was already reading such authors as Beohme and Blake, whose

works had mystical overtones. He was, not reading them uncritically, for his was a secular and scientifically oriented family background which influenced his attitude towards not only mysticism and religion, but all topics generally. As he explained forty-six years later, he read of mysticism "not with derision but with a good deal of scepticism. And with a good deal of fascinated interest."[19]

A letter from this early period reflects the sensitivity that was eventually to help lead Huxley toward a serious interest in mysticism. He had left Oxford for a few weeks vacation on the west coast of Scotland, where he wrote:

> One does feel tremendously, when one is in this beautiful country, that one is a part of a larger soul which embraces everything. But then again I myself feel equally keenly, when I get back among all the wretchedness of the town, that it is impossible to recognize this splendid unity. It looks as though the amount of good and evil were about the same in the world. I think the good will probably win in the end - though not necessarily, unless the most persistent and tremendous efforts are made. I don't think one is justified in taking a holiday, under the belief that everything is necessarily falling out for the best. But I'm not a pessimist, and I think it will be all right. I think we shall ultimately work all the disorder into a simple principle, which will be an Absolute - but which at the present exists only potentially and at the nature of which we can only very dimly guess.20

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[19]Quoted in Sybille Bedford, I, op. cit., p. 57.

[20]Letters, AH to J. D'Aranyi, June, 1915, op. cit., 72-73. In December of the same year Huxley wrote a letter to his brother Julian in which he was even more explicit about his feelings of a mystical reality underlying life's diversity, "I have come to agree with Thomas Aquinas that individuality . . . in the animal kingdom if you like . . . is nothing more than a question of mere matter. We are potentially at least,

This is a concise statement of Huxley's life-long attitude towards the human condition, and is a reflection of his own personal quest, one in which he sought to fuse all the yearnings of modern man, usually so incohately formulated and so negatively channeled, into a single concept (the "amphibious" man) around which human endeavors could orient themselves. In this way, he attempts to make life's meaning clearer and to define the "Absolute" (the divine force) that lay behind all particulars.

In the process of formulating this outlook, Huxley passes through many stages. He is the cynical and clever intellectual with an all-encompassing curiosity and a taste for encyclopedic reading. He is the preacher of mankind's life-forces (Point Counter Point and Beyond Mexique Bay). He is the convinced pacifist and, finally, he is the champion of applied mysticism (the culminative stage of his career, which begins with the writing of Eyeless in Gaza).[21]

In this evolutionary process, Huxley investigates and consequently rejects as inadequate many of the frameworks upon which men base their world-views. In so doing he deviates

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though habit of matter has separated us, unanimous. One cannot escape mysticism; it positively thrusts itself, the only possibility, upon one." Letters, op. cit., p. 88. See also AH, "The Magical and the Spiritual," in Vedanta for the Western World, op. cit., p. 112.

[21] Eyeless in Gaza is followed by three other fictional works in which Huxley tries to develop his belief that mystical insight can teach man a better way of life. There is After Many A Summer (1939) with its long expositions on "Good

from the practice of most of his contemporaries. He comes to reject the "mass" politics characteristic of his democratic homeland, the pursuit of art and science, as has been noted, are found incapable of supplying any ultimate meaning to life,[22] and the ordinary manifestations of religion are to him, if anything, worse than inadequate. Their dogmatic exclusiveness and institutional hierarchies lead them into what Huxley regards as idolatry (a point which shall be discussed shortly). Finally, he even finds the various humanist philosophies to be inadequate. They are too anthropocentric: they exhibit no desire to go beyond the psycho-physical man and give proper recognition to the spiritual dimension of human nature. Ultimately, then, he also parts company with existentialists like Camus and humanists such as Russell.

Between the late 1920's and the mid-1930's, this evolutionary process reaches a turning point.[23] If humanism

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Being". Then comes Time Must Have Stop (1944) with its picture of the post-mortum fate of the high-liver" and the mystical insight which saves the spoiled young boy, Sebastian. Finally, there is Island (1962) where Huxley tries to meld the best of Eastern theology with the most useful of Western technology.

[22]Speaking of his attitude toward art and how it had evolved Huxley writes, "it is through the aesthetic that I came to the spiritual--having begun by rejecting the spiritual in favour of the aesthetic and by identifying it with the aesthetic, making the part include the whole. The sense that even the highest art was not good enough, that if this was all it was a pretty poor thing to be man's man's final end--this was, at bottom, the impelling motive." Letters, AH to Jean E. Hare, Dec. 30, 1945, op. cit., p. 538. See also AH to Miss Hepworth and Mr. Green, 1942, ibid., p. 474.

[23]See Sybille Bedford, I, op. cit., pp. 311-312. Also, AH, "The One and the Many," in Do What You Will (London: Chatto and Windus, 1929), pp. 1-51, passim.

can not supply adequate meaning to life, what can? As early as 1929 Huxley (somewhat ambitiously) concludes that nothing less than a new religious approach to life is necessary--one that can connect all men, regardless of culture and faith, with the same spiritual reality.[24] God has to be "regarded, and if possible experienced as a psychological fact, present at least potentially in every human being."[25] Furthermore, it has to be a religion compatible with the many-sided aspects of human nature, enhancing the complimentary life-forces of mind, body and spirit.[26] Upon pondering these criterion, he comes to regard mysticism as the key to this new religious approach. Here he comes close to the outlook of thinkers like Gerald Heard, Henri Bergson, Martin Buber and Karl Jaspers--men who ultimately believed that a spiritual revival must come before any successful secular reform. Yet there will ultimately be a difference between them and Huxley, for Huxley will not rest satisfied with theoretically elaborating on the end, on the nature of man's spiritual dimension. Huxley also constantly pursues means to the end. In time

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[24] Ibid., pp. 50-51.

[25] Quoted in Bedford, I, op. cit., p. 312.

[26] Huxley's experience with F. M. Alexander must be taken into account here. Alexander's techniques demonstrated to Huxley in a very personal way the interconnectedness of mind, body and spirit. See Letters, AH to Miss Hepworth and Mr. Green, 1942, op. cit., p. 473. See also George Woodcock, Dawn and the Darkest Hour (N.Y.: Viking Press, 1972), p. 194.

this will simplify itself to his seeking out means of facilitating and popularizing the mystical experience.

As Huxley demonstrates in The Perennial Philosophy, mysticism is a universal phenomenon that transcends particular religious dogmas.[27] It accentuates the unity underlying natural diversity without detracting from the importance of that diversity.[28] Thus, Huxley feels, mysticism is conducive to human freedom and full personality development. He seems to take his cue from Christ's saying, "The Kingdom of Heaven is within thee:"

> There may or may not be a posthumous kingdom of heaven; but there is certainly, as Jesus insisted, a kingdom of heaven within us, accessible during life. Salvation in this inward heaven is a certain sentiment of personal integrity and fulfillment, a profoundly satisfying consciousness of being "in order", . . . Salvation is a state of mind, is what we have in our consciousness, when the various elements of our being are in harmony among themselves and with the world that surrounds us.29

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[27]AH, The Perennial Philosophy, op. cit., p. vii.

[28]On the point of mysticism's ability to transcend dogma Huxley makes the following comment, "To the non-Christian, this seems to be supremely important, the eminently encouraging fact about mysticism--that it provides the basis for a religion free from unacceptable dogmas, which themselves are contingent upon ill-established and arbitrarily interpreted historical facts." Grey Eminence, op. cit., p. 77. This reflects Huxley's personal feelings on the subject.

[29]AH, "Grace, Predestination and Salvation," in Hibbert Journal, op. cit., p. 197. Also see Letters, AH to Julian Huxley, Nov. 23, 1942, where he writes:

"But there is in all the religions of any degree of development this highest common factor of mysticism, on which everybody can agree, because it is empirical and does not depend on revelation or history. Mysticism

In essence, this gives mysticism political import. The realization of that "profoundly satisfying consciousness of being 'in order,'" becomes one of the basic criterion upon which to shape social goals.

If people accept the concept that every individual can develop some mystical awareness, and if a society can evolve that tries to realize this potential, then individuals will begin making decisions as to how to behave not only from a strictly temporal, psycho-physical standpoint, but also from a trans-temporal, spiritual one. Huxley feels that should even a minority of any given population achieve this enlarged view of reality (become conscious of a commonly shared "eternal reality" upon which to base a pragmatic code of brotherhood) the "spill-over" effect would be such as to make that society "free from the grosser evils as human conditions can be."[30] In short he believes that:

> We cannot act rightly and effectively unless we are in the habit of laying ourselves open to leadings of the divine Nature of Things. We must draw in the goods of eternity in order to be able to give out the goods of time.31

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also has the enormous merit of being concerned with the eternal present, and not, as humanism is, with the future. The moment you get a religion which thinks primarily about the bigger and better future as do all the political religions from Communism and Nazism up to, at present, harmless because unorganized and powerless, forms of Humanism and Utopianism - it runs the risk of becoming ruthless . . . an age whose chief settled concern is with transcendental religion is so much less fertile in wars and revolutions than an age whose settled and primary concern is humanism and the future." op. cit., p. 483.

[30]See AH, "Religion and Time," in Vedanta for the Western World, op. cit., p. 109.

[31]AH, The Perennial Philosophy, op. cit., p. 300.

Huxley's approach to the role of religion in this process of self-realization is quite practical. He, like the oriental philosophers he so admires, is not interested in theological speculation or religious-bureaucratic arrangements. Again, what interests him is a "transcendental pragmatism:"

> The great merit of the oriental systems of philosophy is that they are all forms of transcendental pragmatism. . . . Their metaphysics and their theology are devised in order to explain certain types of immediate experience. What matters is the experience, not the conceptual system in terms of which the experience is explained. . . . Christianity, Judaism, and Islam have been unduly preoccupied with concepts and symbols. . . . A sensible and realistic religion should be one which is based upon a set of psycho-physical operations, designed to help individuals to realize their potentialities to the greatest possible extent (we normally live at about twenty- per cent of capacity), to heighten their awareness, so that they become conscious of the Unconscious (this is Suzuki's definition of enlightenment) and at the same time fully conscious of other human beings (mutual forgiveness of each vice,' in Blake's words), and fully capable of distinguishing between . . . the given fact in all its staggering profundity and beauty and the conventional symbols in terms of which we try to understand, arrange and manipulate the facts.32

Huxley understood this "pragmatic" approach to religious experience within the context of a species-wide yearning for self-transcendence.[33] The Eastern approach which supplies a

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[32] Letters, AH to Julian Huxley, Sept., 10, 1957, op. cit., p. 827. This theology of life is portrayed in Island. Huxley also finds many of the principles of such a theological pragmatism set forth in Paul Rep's Zen Flesh, Zen Bones, Anchor Books (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday). Also see Letters, AH to Timothy Leary, Feb. 11, 1962, op. cit., p. 929.

[33] See AH, "The History of Tension," in Scientific Monthly, op. cit., p. 4. The well known psychiatrist Sydney Cohen agrees with Huxley on this point, "A pervasive drive that is singularly human is the need to temporarily change our

practice by which religious theory can be verified ultimately means for him that it is possible to establish a controlled way of proceeding toward self-transcendence so that it culminates in spiritual unity with the God-head. The question remained, could means be developed which allowed this to happen on a relatively mass scale?

II

As a "transcendental pragmatist" Huxley attempts to bring every facet of his critique of society (the need to deemphasize nationalist idolatries", break through the barriers of language and culture, get in touch with physiological processes, etc.) into play in the task of achieving an "amphibious" religious approach to reality. The central

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state of awareness, to alter private reality, to be beside ourselves for a while. We are the only species that experiences this need; somehow the ordinary range of consciousness is incompletely satisfying to us. The Beyond Within, op. cit., p. 10.

In terms of ordinary existence, this need for getting out of ourselves is satisfied in a number of ways: music, religious services, arousing sports events, sex, extravaganzas of every sort. All of these in their limited way, allow us to forget ourselves for a brief time and in so doing all (in a sense) offer us limited self-transcendence. This ubiquitous seeking of the more mundane and limited paths to transcendence would seem to reflect an equally universal feeling of inadequacy with our ordinary psycho-physical existences. Huxley suggests that "[Men] long to get out of themselves, to pass beyond the limits of that tiny universe, within which every individual finds himself confined." The Devils of Loudun, op. cit., p. 67. As will be seen it is within the context of this belief that Huxley seeks to evaluate the socio-religious value of psychedelic drugs.

concern is a transcending enhancement of individual life-experiences--something he assumed everyone desired but which most now sought in decidedly negative ways. Furthermore, it is what is considered to be the most notorious of these "negative ways"--first the social and political activities of the orthodox Western religions (a point to be taken up shortly) and second, man's wholly secular efforts to overcome the mediocrity of daily life[34] (Huxley is here thinking of such things as ideological fanaticism, hatred and elitism bred of nationalism, the various forms of "crowd-delirium," and the abuse of drugs such as alcohol and barbituates),[35] that cause him to grasp so strongly at mystical religion. He believes that mystical religion, when combined with an "amphibious" view of man can lead to nothing but positive self-transcending experiences. His problem, as he sees it, is to persuade people that they are really seeking self-transcendence that can only be fully satisifed in mystical terms and that there are also available means to this end. Then, he hopes, they will give up their more familiar yet negative political, hedonistic or more staid "orthodox" paths to self-transcendence and the world will be a better place. As naive as this sounds Huxley was sure that, at least on the individual level, it was possible--possible just because he felt he could

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[34]See AH, "Drugs that Shape Men's Minds," in Collected Essays, op. cit., p. 338.

[35]AH, "The History of Tension," op. cit., p. 4.

supply pragmatic means to a demonstratably beneficial end. It was in the 1950's with psychedelics that he became convinced of this possibility. Prior to this time he was prone to concentrate on spiritual exercises and psychophysical technqieus and to condemn the use of all drugs as debilitating. Just prior to "discovering" psychedelics he wrote:

> In modern times beer and other toxic short cuts to self-transcendence are no longer officially worshipped as gods. Theory has undergone a change, but not practice; for in practice millions upon millions of civilized men and women continue to pay their devotions, not to the liberating and transfiguring Spirit, but to alcohol, to hashish, to opium and its derivatives, to the barbiturates, and the other synthetic additions to the age-old catalogue of poisons capable to causing self-transcendence. In every case, of course, what seems a god is actually a devil, what seems a liberation is in fact an enslavement. The self-transcendence is invariably downward into the less than human.36

Even with this attitude, however, he did leave the door open, if only a crack, to the positive religious effects of drug use. He noted that even the most dehumanizing drug could, sometimes, bring a person to a point from which he or she could catch a fleeting glimpse of that "spiritual otherness" which underlies all being. Once the ego's shell is penetrated the realities of the various "not-selves" (that is elements of our being of which we are not ordinarily conscious)--"the organic not-self, the sub-conscious not-self, the collective not-self of the psychic medium in which all our thinking

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[36] AH, The Devils of Loudun, op. cit., p. 315.

and feeling have their existence, and the immanent and transcendent not-self of the Spirit"--may become discernable. There can, at that point exist the possibility that the descent can be transformed into an ascent.[37] An example of this might be found in those occasional spontaneous cures (frequently described in terms of theophanies) affected by some alcoholics when they have "hit bottom" with delirium tremors.

Later, Huxley's attitude toward psychedelic drugs (though not others such as alcohol) becomes more positive. He learned that mescalin was not addictive and seemed to be of no real threat to the physical or mental health of most people and that this drug played a very positive role in the rites of the Native American Church.

III

If at first Huxley is hesitant to associate drugs and mysticism, he is consistently reluctant to relate those "dogmatic religions" which seemed to him to sanctify "a personal, moral God" with mysticism's upward-leading path. He believes that Christianity, Judaism, and Islam all tend to be intolerant and both materially and temporally oriented. He therefore favors non-dogmatic, Eastern philosophies. Comparing Buddhism and Christianity, he writes:

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[37] Ibid., pp. 323-324.

> Buddhism, like Hinduism, teaches Ahimsa, or harmlessness towards all living things . . . Alone of all the great world religions, Buddhism made its way without persecution, censorship or inquisition. In all these aspects its record is enormously superior to that of Christianity, which made its way among people wedded to militarism . . . For Buddhists, anger is always and unconditionally disgraceful. For Christians . . . there is such a thing as "righteous indignation". Thanks to this possibility of indignation being righteous, Christians have always felt themselves justified in making war and committing the most hideous atrocities.38

How did righteous indignation, hubris and megalomania come to be associtated with many orthodox Western religions? To answer this question Huxley develops an interesting, if not entirely original, theory. The sort of god worshipped by most institutionally-oriented religions is a personal god--one that is manifested anthropomorphically in time. This personal god is portrayed as both creator of all life and destroyer of all enemies. He is a god who slays infidels or condemns sinners to hell. Those who identify themselves with this type of deity--those who associate his teachings exclusively with their own in-group have, historically, found it appropriate to express the same wrath and implement the same destructive policies which they attribute to their god.[39] At the very least, the result has been dogmatism in theory, intolerance in prac ice, and total disrespect for the development of individual avenues to spiritual awareness.

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[38] AH, Ends and Means, op. cit., pp. 92-93.

[39] AH, "Eternity and Time," in American Scholar, op. cit., pp. 298-299. Also see AH, "Justifications," in The Tree, op. cit., pp. 195-196.

Others have noted the detrimental effects of the worship of an ultimately antropomorhically conceived god. Samuel Coleridge wrote in 1802:

> Even the worship of one God becomes idolatry in my convictions, when, instead of the Eternal and Omnipresent, in whom we live and move and have our being, we set up a distinct Jehovah, tricked out in the anthropomorphic attributes of Time and successive thoughts, and think of him as a person from whom we had our Being . . . God is a spirit and must be worshipped in spirit.40

Also, as we have noted, DeQuincey believed that a people can be identified by the type of god it worships. Here too Huxley agrees; he believes that religious beliefs remain "among the determining factors" shaping the behavior of society.[41] Religion's sway is not of the same character it once was. It has had to adopt itself to modern, technologically-oriented patterns of thought. Nevertheless, it has maintained a certain potency. The various faiths of the West have allowed both their dogmas and bureaucracies to become adjuncts of the rising tide of state worship (as exemplified by the Protestant sects which have tied themselves to the flag in the United States). If, as Huxley believes, the conduct of a nation can be one of the criterion by which we can judge "the practical effectiveness" of that nation's

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[40] L. Griggs (ed.), Collected Letters of S. T. Coleridge, II, Coleridge to Rev. J. P. Estlin, December 7, 1802 (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1956), p. 893. See also, W. G. T. Shedd (ed.), Complete Works of S. T. Coleridge, I, (N.Y.: 1854), pp. 457-458.

[41] AH, The Perennial Philosophy, op. cit., p. 242.

prevailing religion "in helping individuals to advance towards the goal of human existence," them, again by Huxley's standards, our judgment must be a critical one.[42]

Historically speaking, Huxley demonstrates what he sees as the effects of the involvement of Western religion in politics and other secular matters in his book Grey Eminence. Basing his book on thorough historical research, he observes that Father Joseph thought that he did the work of God by being Richelieu's Foreign Minister and that the intrigues which he conducted would result in "leading a whole national community along a political short-cut into the Kingdom of Heaven on earth."[43] In truth they led to death and destruction for thousands in the Thirty-Years War.

Huxley draws a moral from all this:

> Civilization demands from the individual devoted self-identification with the highest of human causes. But if this self-identification with what is human is not accompanied by a conscious and consistent effort to achieve upward self-transcendence into the universal life of the Spirit, the goods achieved will always be mingled with counter-balancing evils.44

In other words, without the spiritual enlightment of those individuals who set forth the world's most popular ideals, the melding of morality and social action will only serve to make

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[42] Ibid.

[43] AH, Grey Eminence, op. cit., p. 255. Also Letters, AH to Julian Huxley, Mar. 13, 1941, op. cit., p. 464.

[44] AH, The Devils of Loudun, op. cit., p. 327.

idols of their ideals--idols with the force of armies and vast bureaucracies behind them--and, as Huxley further observed, "every idol, however exalted, turns out, in the long run, to be a Moloch, hungry for human sacrifice."[45] The object, then, is to partially remove man from time, rather than wholly immerse God in it.

In a practical sense, however, Huxley understands that it is unrealistic to expect populations which have been conditioned over thousands of years to place their faith in a personal, anthromorphic deity, to quickly adopt the worship of a mystical "God without form."[46] His goal is the slow evolution of an environment which would allow for a recognition of the need for mystical enlightenment and would sustain sufficient freedoms to make possible the pursuit of that goal.

Thus, for Huxley, religion as practiced in the West and the coming to awareness of one's spiritual dimension are not synnonmous. Most religious passion, however, (with the exception of certain Protestant faiths) no matter how misdirected Huxley might find it, is an expression of mankind's universal urge to self-transcendence. That we as a species, seem to him to consistently express the desire to reach beyond ourselves, suggests to Huxley that in some obscure way we are all aware of that shared spiritual dimension.[47] Mysticism

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[45] Ibid.

[46] AH, The Perennial Philosophy, op. cit., p. 32.

[47] AH, The Devils of Loudun, op. cit., p. 69.

corrects what Huxley considers organized religion's misuse (that is tendency towards dogmatism and intolerance) of the self-transcending urge, and brings the spiritual self closer to consciousness. In so doing, it operationally demonstrates its worth.

IV

So far, however, its worth is operationally demonstrated to but a few, for there are not many individuals who can or want to practice the technqiues of meditation and psycho-physical discipline that might lead to genuine mystical awareness. Indeed, for the vast majority in the West, mysticism is taken as a mixture of magic and insanity. As we have seen, the reason for the scepticism involves the fact that most have never had anything like a visionary or mystical experience and tend in this case, to disbelieve that with which they are not familiar at first-hand. To Huxley, however, there is another important factor working here: when people read or hear of these happenings they encounter difficulties in understanding the reported accounts for, by their very nature, mystical experiences do not lend themselves to verbal description. Those few mystics who have put pen to paper on the subject were reduced to describing their insights and revelations in paradoxical terms. A good example is Peter Starry's statement, "Didst thou ever see a bright infinite in the narrow point of an object? Then thou knowst what the

spirit means."[48] Another illustration is the much-used descriptive phrase, "The Clear Light of the Void." Huxley himself tries to improve on this language in his The Perennial Philosophy but, could not get very far.

For Huxley this lack of a "less inadequate" language of mysticism (one can never really have a fully adequate language for speaking about God) is relevant to his efforts at popularizing the worth of the mystical experience. There are, no doubt, theological, psychological and bio-chemical elements to the mystical experience and there exist technical languages to describe each component. If, however, one cannot devise a language to unify these diverse interpretations a major roadlbock will remain in the way of bringing about an acceptance of the reality of mystical truths.[49] Everyday language is obviously inadequate, for it deals with a wholly different set of phenomena. The terminology of the psychologist

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[48]Cited in Ibid., p. 146.

[49]AH, "The Final Revolution," in Contact, op. cit., p. 9. See also the section of Huxley's previously unpublished notes on this matter in Laura Huxley, This Timeless Moment, op. cit., pp. 195-196.

Here is a good example of the paradox Huxley sometimes finds himself confronted with. What does it mean to seek out a language for something that you already know is, a priori, beyond words? Yet, trying to work his influence within a culture literally infatuated with words, how can he propagate the mystical truths except by communicating them, at least initially, through a verbal medium? Huxley's whole endeavor here is to seek a language that is least misleading. He knows that this quest is one of unfortuate necessity, entailing all the risks and pitfalls of all mixtures of the verbal and emotional.

and psychiatrist also fails to elucidate such experiences and Huxley dismisses it as, as yet, too speculative. The language of the bio-chemist and the scientific investigator, on the other hand, does shed some light on the psycho-physical mechanisms that occur in conjunction with these experiences. This tells part of the story, that part most accessible to the temporally restricted language descriptive of matter in motion, but it does not describe the "mystical" element of these experiences. Theology supplies a language that tries to do just this, but has only produced the para-doxical phraseology mentioned above. All these languages explain part of the puzzle, but none provide the correlating terminology and larger frame of reference that would, on a verbal level at least, bring all the above approaches together in a deeper more comprehensive one.

Ultimately, what Huxley seeks is a unified field theory to explain humanity's spiritual dimension within the context of psycho-physical existence. This is an achievement which the scientific know-how, research technqiues and general curiosity of the West might someday realize. In the meantime the average westerner has no symbolic way of approaching mysticism. Huxley laments the fact that the European and American world does not even have any symbols comparable to the East's Dancing Shiva, which tend to meld the different aspects of existence into one explanatory whole, and thus

represent to the Hindu believer the unity underlying all the diverse aspects of the universe.[50] This again reflects Huxley's awareness of the need to popularize mysticism in the West. He notes that Edward Conze, in his book Buddhism, observes that Eastern mysticism is usually associated with myths and superstitions;[51] he expresses the hope that the West might one day develop an "asceptic" mysticism free of these traits.[52] If, however, the positive, self-transcending aspects of the mystical experience could be preserved, Huxley would, no doubt, be quite willing to tolerate a bit of superstition. Unfortunately, the West lacks the predisposition necessary in order to make sense of the mystical experience; thus even a popular mysticism born of superstition is unlikely to develop.

As he becomes familiar with the psychedelic drugs another way of demonstrating mystical truths appears to Huxley--a path that by-passes symbolic communication altogether, and potentially makesdirect visionary and mystical insight widely available. Following his realization of their religious potential, there still remained the problem of persuading people to recognize this worth and to choose to use the drugs

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[50]See the fourth part of the Canadian Broadcasting Company's program Ideas, March, 1974, on Aldous Huxley. (Hereafter referred to as Ideas).

[51]Edward Conze, Buddhism (Oxford: B. Cassirer, 1951), Chpt. III.

[52]Ideas, op. cit., Part four, passim.

to heighten spiritual awareness.[53]

Huxley attempts to use his own talent with words to lay a knowledgable basis for the use of psychedelics in

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[53]Despite all the hostile suggestions that Huxley's Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell acted somehow as a catalyst for the 1960's drug fad, it is probably closer to the truth that these attacks are carry-overs from a real fear (sometimes bordering on sheer panic) inspired by the figure of Timothy Leary. Leary, a learned, youthful and charismatic would-be prophet once seemed to be the Pied Piper incarnate, leading a whole generation of children astray via LSD.

His approach to the rediscovery of the "mind-manifesting" potential of psychedelic agents was at first academic and scientific but then turned religious and evangelic. He decided it was best to be "out-front"--to spread (with as much fanfare and publicity as he could muster) the good news that here were a series of literal wonder drugs that could make us all truly mystical. The alienated youth of city and suburbs started to respond to the call. It is, I believe within the context of the ensuing general public's over-reaction to the Leary phenomenon that Huxley's efforts were interpreted. Wrongly identified with the Pied Piper, he too was feared.

Given these circumstances, it is interesting to look at the real relationship that existed between these two adventurous and well-meaning men. Both, in fact, knew each other in the hay-day, (early 1960's) of the LSD fad. As Dr. Humphry Osmond points out in his recent book Understanding Understanding (N.Y.: Bantam Books, 1974), pp. 92-95, he and Huxley initially misread Leary's personality. They thought him a sober scientist in whose good hands this new and promising field of research could be safely entrusted. Theyw ere both surprised and dismayed when Leary seemed to disregard the advise that Huxley had given him, "to do good discreetly." In truth, as Osmond goes on to show, Leary did not so much disregard Huxley's warning as interpret it in a way that was worlds removed from the meaning Huxley himself intended.

The two men were of vastly different personality types and this, no doubt, contributed to their misreading each other. As Sybille Bedford writes (vol. II, op. cit., p. 335), "Aldous deplored the antics of young Timothy Leary, that enthusiast and high priest of the psychedelic cult. . . . Aldous often tried to warn him; had urged him, for instance, without much success, to get his followers to desist from taking green LSD, a boot-legged liquid in plastic bottles which was circulating at the time."

facilitating the mystical experience (a task which began with the publication of The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell). First, he tries to demonstrate the reality and practical worth of these states of mind, explaining that our minds are primarily concerned with physical and social survival, but that there exists a way of viewing the environment that transcends this immediate preoccupation and reveals the world and oneself as endowed with enduring spiritual significance. There are two levels at which one can experience this revelation. First, is the "visionary" experience, often characterized by the transformation of the external world so that it appears to exist with a praternatural intensity, but which is not the same as the state of mystical union with God. Huxley explains that:

> Visionary experience is not the same as mystical experience. Mystical experience is beyond the realm of opposites. Visionary experience is still within that realm. Heaven entails hell, and 'going to heaven' is no more liberation than is the descent into horror. Heaven [the visionary experience] is merely a vantage point from which the divine Ground can be more clearly seen than on the level of ordinary individualized existence.54

This is an experience that is often known as nature mysticalism or cosmological mysticism,[55] and is common among

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Leary was a visionary whose outlook blinded him to the hard reality that his time and place did not form a friendly environment for his vision. Huxley was more analytical, more the thinker. He was far-sighted enough to grasp Leary's vision but also sure-footed enough to know it couldn't be accomplished by the visionary alone.

[54]AH, Heaven and Hell, op. cit., p. 116. See also Letters, AH to Margaret Isherwood, Aug. 12, 1959, op. cit., p. 874.

[55]See Masters and Houton, op. cit., p. 303.

those inspired poets and artists who celebrate nature's glory.[56] The visionary state has been considered by most of the great mystics of history as a kind of way-station along the road to the final stage of spiritual liberation. Huxley describes one aspect of this deeper level of mysticism as follows:

> When the phenomenal ego transcends itself, the essential Self is free to realize, in terms of a finite consciousness, the fact of its own eternity, together with the correlative fact that every particular in the world of experience partakes of the timeless and the infinite. This is liberation, this is enlightenment, this is the beatific vision, in which all things are perceived as they are "in themselves" and not in relation to a craving and abhorring ego.57

Beyond a certain undefinable point, one ceases to be merely aware of a sense of oneness and, in religious terms, merges with the divine Ground--the source of all diversity.

It would seem that in this state, contradictions indeed dissolve. Consciousness is expanded until it ceases to find any real division between itself and the world and, as Alan Watts phrases it, one ceases to overlook the fact

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[56]For example see Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey." Also In this context it is interesting to quote Havelock Ellis who wrote, " A large part of its [Mescaline's] charm lies in the halo of beauty which it casts around the simplest and commonest things. . . Not only the general attitude of Wordsworth, but many of his most memorable poems and phrases can not - one is almost tempted to say - be appreciated in their full significance by one who has never been under the influence of mescal. On all these grounds it may be claimed that the artificial paradise of mescal . . . is . . . dignified beyond its peers." "Mescal: A New Artificial Paradise," in The Contemporary Review, LXXIII (Jan. 1898), p. 141.

[57]The Devils of Loudun, op. cit., p. 69. Also see Laura Huxley, This Timeless Moment, op. cit., p. 147. For a

that "all boundries and divisions are held in common by their opposite sides.[58] Everything becomes a unified process; death appears as natural a function of life as breathing because it no longer represents an end, but rather a part of a continuum.

In The Perennial Philosophy Huxley explains that such a state of being need not be interpreted as a mere escape from the travail of this world. Indeed, he does not feel that one should retreat into what he terms the "clear light," but that one should use one's spiritual insight to achieve a transforming reconciliation between oneself and the "ordinary" world. Such a person's life becomes, according to Huxley,

> an unsleeping and one-pointed contemplation of the of the God-head in and through the things, lives, minds and events of the world of becoming. There is here no mutiliation of the soul, no atrophy of any of its powers and capacities. Rather, there is a general enhancement and intensification of consciousness, and at the same time an extention and transfiguration.59

Thus, those occasions which, to an ordinary person, might appear as distractions and temptations, are approached

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further elaboration on the characteristics of both visionary and mystical states see Masters and Houston, op. cit., pp. 247-313.

[58]Alan Watts, The Joyous Cosmology (N.Y. Pantheon Books, 1962), pp. 56-58. A similar loss of ego boundries is often experienced under psychedelics. See Sidney Cohen, op. cit., p. 42.

[59]AH, The Perennial Philosophy, op. cit., p. 299.

by an "enlightened soul" as situations which can advance the spiritual awareness of others. Seeing the divine essence in all about him, spiritually liberated man uses secular interactions as opportunities to bring this awareness to consciousness. In this way, the divine Ground is realized "in the world as well as in the soul."[60]

Finally, Huxley believes that the mystic is a purveyor of love; that is, the socially active mystic infuses love and humility into the world by his own example.[61] Huxley felt that he had come to an emotional understanding that "God is Love" while under the influence of mescalin. (It must be emphasized that he felt the drug had helped him reach a state where this became a self-evident fact on an emotional level. He is not speaking here of an intellectual understanding one may arrive at when just reading such a statement.) Those in unison with God also become, for him, examples of unselfish "Love." While Huxley's psychedelic experiences were not deeply mystical this instance gave him a direct, non-intellectual awareness that an important part of the mystical relevation is "the direct, total awareness from the inside, so to say, of Love as the primary and fundamental cosmic fact."[62] Some level of mystical awareness is a

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[60] Ibid., p. 62.

[61] Ibid., p. 301.

[62] AH, Letters, AH to H. Osmond, October 24, 1955, op. cit., p. 769. The question can be put: just because

prerequisite to this feeling, and the feeling is, in Huxley's opinion, a prerequisite to peace on earth.[63]

Thus, the mystic has a vital and practical worth for any society,[64] and teaching people to be "mystically-minded" becomes a viable way out of the trap of the modern vacuous life-style so prevalent in the West. The notion that here lies a road which was necessary to any full "amphibiousness" or full human status begins to come to Huxley as early as 1925.[65] Later, with such works of non-fiction as

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Huxley came to such an awareness does this mean everyone would? There is no guarantee that the psychedelic experience can lead to such a revelation any more than the reading of the Bible. However, as will be seen, a significantly high percentage of those who take psychedelics under properly controlled circumstances do in fact have one sort of religious experience or another--that is not all lead to this particular revelation of Huxley's.

[63]AH, The Perennial Philosophy, op. cit., pp. 80-96.

[64]Thus Huxley writes: "The mystics are channels through which a little knowledge of reality filters down into our human universe of ignorance and illusion. A totally unmystical world would be a world totally blind and insane. From the beginnings of the eighteenth century onwards, the sources of mystical knowledge have been steadily diminishing in number, all over the planet. We are dangerously far advanced into darkness." Grey Eminence, op. cit., p. 82.

[65]At that time Huxley wrote, "the fundamental problem is love and humility, which are the same thing. The enormous difficulty of love and humility - a difficulty greater now, I feel, than ever; because men are more solitary now than they were . . . the tribe has disappeared and every at all conscious man stands above, surrounded by other solitary individuals . . . for which he feels no respect. Obviously the only thing to be done is to go right through with the process; to realize individuality to the full, the real individuality, Lao-Tsz(u)'s individuality, the Yogis' individuality, and with it the oneness of everything." Letters AH to R. Nichols, April 10, 1925, Even earlier, in the dark days of World War I Huxley expressed

Ends and Means and The Perennial Philosophy as well as fictional pieces exemplified by Time Must Have A Stop and Island the concept is securely part of his whole "pragmatic" philosophy. Yet the value of being "mystically minded" only presented Huxley with an already mentioned problem. In his early and middle years, those corresponding to all the above mentioned works except Island, he was of the opinion that only a very few could or even wanted to learn anything of "Reality" beyond their limited, everyday horizons. It was a sort of elitism that while never effecting his consistently open and tolerant personal manner, was obviously reflected in the sometimes brutally penetrating analysis of his written work. In his later years, his attitude did not so much radically changes as become amended. The central concern, as ever, was to allow people the opportunities to maximize their knowledge and awareness if they so choose. Certainly by the time of the late 1930's Huxley was much more concerned with working out positive methods of allowing for that maximization, rather than with simply criticizing society for its inadequacies in this field. As has been shown above, he felt that if people could operate in small, decentralized groups, working towards recognizably human goals, their sense of humanity could be revitalized and their love of an interest in life

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the thought that love might be "the only reality.":"This war impresses on me more than ever the fact that friendship, love, whatever you like to call it is the only reality . . . It simply is truth in the highest form we can attain to." Letters, AH, to Jelly D'Arany; Oct. 1915, op. cit., p. 83.

revived. Mysticism was to play a central role in this process--it gave the individual a necessary insight into the divine nature of reality and an equally divine, commonly shared, human essence. The question arose: how can one make the mystical experience more readily available? This was at first a particularly perplexing problem, for it was almost as though a further, now natural elitism was operating. This key element in the humanization of man, the ultimate positive goal of the self-transcendent urge, seemed to be open only to those few who would or could undertake long years of disciplined meditation and physical mortification (or to the rarer few who underwent a spontaneous experience). In the early 1950's, as we have seen, Huxley had his first experience with mescaline, and his view of the prospects for the rest of mankind began to change. He came to believe that here, with these "mind-manifesting" drugs, might be found a vehicle by which (if carefully and discreetly used) the average man and woman might gain something approximating mystical insight.[66] He explains it this way:

> Physiologically costless, or nearly costless, stimulators of the mystical faculties are now making their appearance, and many kinds of them will soon be on the market. We can be quite sure that, as and when they become available, they will be extensively used. The urge to self-transcendence is so strong and so general that it cannot be otherwise. In the past very few people have had spontaneous experiences of a pre-mystical or fully mystical nature; still fewer have

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[66] Bedford,II, op. cit., p. 331.

> been willing to undergo the psychophysical disciplines which prepare an insulated individual for this kind of self-transcendence. The powerful but nearly cost-less mind changers of the future will change all this completely. Instead of being rare, premystical and mystical experiences will become common.[67]

Several points must be clarified before the practical implications of this statement can be discussed. A psychedelic experience can be influenced by several factors, all of which must be investigated if the "trip" is to be, as Huxley phrases it, "nearly costless" and result in a "genuine religious experience."[68] It has by now been well-demonstrated that the immediate physical and emotional environment in which the drug session is carried out should be as comfortable and unthreatening as possible (we are all psychologically affected by our environment and the highly-sensitized psychedelic subject, much more so); the atittude of the administor of the drug, the one who acts as a "guide" or supervisor of the session, must be supportive and encouraging; and finally, and perhaps most importantly, the general mental framework of the subject must be determined, in order to eliminate potential psychotics and borderline schizophrenics (for whom these drugs are harmful).[69] The fist two conditions are easily open to control and, through them, the experience can be directed somewhat.

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[67]AH, "Drugs that Shape Men's Minds," in Collected Essays, op. cit., 345. See also Letters, AH to Victoria Ocampo, July 19, 1956, op. cit., p. 802.

[68]AH, "Drugs that Change Men's Minds," in Collected Essays, op. cit., p. 343.

[69]See Brian Wells, Psychedelic Drugs (N.Y.: Jason Aronson, 1974), pp. 32, 34, 49-42, 89, and 193.

For example, an environment can be created in which the setting subtly encourages religious interpretations of the various feelings and impressions the subject might encounter, thus maximizing the potential for a spiritually liberating experience. The third condition, that of the determination of the user's basic mental health, can be achieved only through prior testing.

Huxley would likely have favored a much more elaborate preparation for the potential psychedelic subject. One can interpret his entire novel, Island, as an outline of the proper preparatory context for taking these mind-altering agents. As Huxley's friend, Humphry Osmond affirmed on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's radio program "Ideas," people have got to be educated as to how to approach these drugs and generally what to expect from them.[70] Huxley himself is a good example of an individual well prepared for such an experience. He had a wonderfully open and inquisitive mind, did not perceive the world with anger or fear, and had an intellectual awareness of what he was doing and what he might expect. Finally, he had a background that led him to believe in the legitimacy and worth of mystical insight. What is most important, from Huxley's point of view, is that the use of these drugs should be integrated into an overall,

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The frequency of "bad trips" which make such good headlines and so greatly scare the general public, are, in great part, a function of the uncontrolled, blackmarket (and thus paranoid) environment in which these drugs are now used.

[70]"Ideas," op. cit.

"amphibiously" oriented educational approach which would lead people to recognize and seek the benefits of certain kinds of enhanced perception. One should not begin with the psychedelics, but rather use them to help open doors which people have already recognized the need of opening.

Given the importance and influence of the controllable factors in the psychedelic experience, the following can be conjectured: given a controlled environment in which, say LSD or psilocybin, is administered so that it accentuates religious imagery and the sanctity and interrelatedness of all things and, further, if one brings to this environment minds that are so educated as to have already accepted the immediate every day worth of mystical insight,[71] then one can be reasonably sure that the psychedelic experience will produce a significantly high percentage of genuine pre-mystical (visionary) or mystical states of consciousness. Even where preparatory education has not been carried out, it is possible to say that as long as the individual is open to, rather than hostile towards, such an environment, a significant, though lower number of such religious experiences will result.

Evidence gathered through numerous scientifically-conducted field experiments carried on before psychedelic

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[71] Presently, of course, very few would meet this requirement. Huxley's later writings and speeches were aimed at, among other things, increasing their number. Still, such people are now few and far between.

drugs became illegal lends weight to such expectations. In Varieties of Psychedelic Experience, Masters and Houston report on five such studies of the religious import of psychedelic agents.[72] These experiments support the view that, even in secular settings with subjects not particularly religious in outlook, a significant number of religiously oriented experiences occur. Dr. Huston Smith, who has conducted research seeking to determine what religious significance psychedelics might have observes:

> The way the statistics are currently running, it looks as if from one-fourth to one-third of the general population will have religious experiences if they take the drugs under naturalistic conditions, meaning by this conditions in which the researcher supports the subject but doesn't try to influence the direction his experience will take. Among subjects who have religious inclinations to begin with, the proportion of those having religious experiences jumps to three-fourths. If they take them in settings which are religious too, the ration soars to nine out of ten.73

Similar conclusions are drawn by Dr. Walter Pahnke (Director of Clinical Sciences at the Maryland Psychiatric Research Center) in a carefully controlled "Good Friday" experiment using psilocybin with theology students. He reports:

> The result of our experiment would indicate that psilocybin (and LSD and Mescalin by analogy) are important tools for the study of the mystical state of consciousness. Experiences previously possible

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[72] Masters and Houston, op. cit., pp. 253-255.

[73] Huston Smith, "Do Drugs Have Religious Import?" in Journal of Philosophy, LXI, No. 18 (Sept. 17, 1964), p. 520. See also J. Downing and W. Wygant, Jr., "Psychedelic Experience and Religious Belief," in R. Blum (ed.), Utopiates (London: Tavistock Publishers, 1965), pp. 187-198.

> for only a small minority of people, and difficult to study because of their unpredictability and rarity, are now reproducible under suitable conditions.74

These are only two of hundreds of tests that have been conducted. Most of the others, like Leary's well-known experiment with sixty-nine theologically trained individuals[75] substantiate the position presented above.

A qualifying word must now be added. Religious experiences, whether involving drugs or not are, as we have seen, of different kinds and intensities. Masters and Houston, for example, lay great stress on the "depth level" of experience in order to distinguish those which acutely effect bodily sensations from visionary experiences and these again from "the luminous vision of the One," that is, the full mystical experience.[76] Not all of the psychedelic encounters reported by the experimenters cited above are of the full mystical type; a good percentage of them are of a pre-mystical or visionary quality. Here we must keep in

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[74]Dr. W. Pahnke, "Drugs and Mysticism," (first published in the International Journal of Paraphsychology, VIII, No. 2, (1966), pp. 295-320), Quote above is cited from the reprint in Psychedelics, op. cit., p. 159.

[75]Timothy Leary,"The Religious Experience," in The Psychedelic Review, I, No. 3 (1964), p. 325.

[76]Masters and Houston, op. cit., pp. 258-259. Much effort on the part of not only researchers but scholars interested in the history of mysticism, has gone into defining, on the one hand, the different types of mysticism and, on the other, just exactly what sort of religious experiences many of these psychedelics facilitate. For instance, the noted authority on mysticism, W. R. Stace has described an

mind Huxley's belief that these visionary-religious states of perception can be of great help in the quest for spiritual awareness.

The important point that Huxley, Masters and Houston, Pahnke, Leary, Smith and others believe themselves to have adequately demonstrated is that despite varying "depth levels," psychedelic drugs do help lead significant numbers to religious and even fully mystical experiences.[77] That they aid some more than others, and some more quickly than others, is understandable, given the fact that people's psycho-physical make-ups differ widely. The implications of the religious import of these agents are truly revolutionary, and as such have drawn a predictable outcry of opposition. This opposition must now be examined before we can discuss

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introvertive, "major" type of mysticism and an extrovertive, "minor" kind--the "major" type being union with God and the "minor" type being a visionary or "nature-oriented" mysticism. (See W. R. Stace, Mysticism and Philosophy (Phila.: Lippincott, 1960), pp. 79 and 110-111. Masters and Houston adhere to Stace's distinctions in describing the religious experiences undergone by their own 206 subjects. They rightly point out that often, because researchers themselves have little knowledge of what does and what does not constitute a mystical state of consciousness, experiences such as "intense empathetic communion" with those around the subject or with nature, will be interpereted as the achievement of a mystical state (op. cit., p. 306). They warn that one must give careful attention to the "depth level" of the experience. Here they take their cue from the many mystics of history who have repeatedly sought to distinguish between the final stage of union with the Divine Ground and those "heavenly" stages along the way.

[77]W. T. Stace once made the following comment about mystical experience occurring under the influence of psychedelic drugs, "It is not a matter of its being similar to mystical

the conclusions Huxley himself draws from this potential.

V

Throughout history, there have been many theologians and mystics who, having undergone years of self-discipline and bodily mortification, were understandably reluctant to view the very rapid achievement of a visionary or mystical state via drugs as "the real thing." For example, the Islamic sufi poet and philosopher, Djemal-ud-din al-Roumi (who, under the better known name of Mewlana, founded the Mewlewi order of Whirling Dervishes) consistantly discouraged his followers from using hashish to achieve religious experiences and generally condemned it as a deceptive short-cut to states of being only achievable through spiritual exercises.[78] More recently, this position has been popularized by R. C. Zaehner who, in his book Mysticism, Sacred and Profane.[79] emotionally challenges Huxley's claim that psychedelics can sometimes lead one to genuine mystical states of awareness.

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experience; it is mystical experience." cited in H. Smith, "Do Drugs Have Religious Import?" op. cit., pp. 523-524.

[78]See Edward Roditi's Forward to Baudelaire, Artificial Paradise, Trans. by Ellen Fox, (N.Y.: Herder & Herder, 1971), p. xciii. On the other hand, there are orders of Dervishes who do sanction the use of hashish. See John P. Brown, The Dervishes (London: Trubner & Co., 1868), pp. 308-312.

[79]R. C. Zaehner, Mysticism, Sacred and Profane (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957).

Zaehner is an Eastern scholar who ascribes to yet another description of the different mystical states. According to his division, there are two lesser and one higher state of mysticism. The two lesser ones are first, nature mysticism, and second, something he calls "monistic" mysticism, or the identification with an "impersonal absolute." The other, higher and truer mystical state he labels "theistic" mysticism. This is described as that time when the soul is finally in the conscious presence of the "living personal God."[80] In terms of this division, Zaehner proceeds to analyse Huxley's mescalin experience as described in The Doors of Perception. He comes to the conclusion that it was at best a combination of the two lesser types of mysticism. From this (and a personal encounter with mescalin) Zaehner has become convinced that drug-induced consciousness is inferior to the historical mystical experiences of Christianity.

One can, however, dispute Zaehner's categories. The mystical unions described by Buddhists, for example, are certainly not of a "personal" God, but rather what he calls "monistic" in character. Must we then say that the mystical state of consciousness achieved by the Buddha was of a lesser quality than that of the Christian saints? Indeed, this is what Zaehner implies. However, even if we accept his classifications, Zaehner is hardly entitled, from the evidence he

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[80] It must be added that one sometimes has the impression that Zaehner would like to dismiss the two lesser forms of mysticism and regard "theistic" mysticism as the only authentic type.

supplies, to conclude that psychedelics are of no use in achieving the higher state of mysticism. Huxley himself never claimed that his psychedelic experience led him to full mystical union, "theistic" or otherwise. Zaehner's statement that it was not such (as well as his dismissal of his own mescalin experience as "trivial") only demonstrates that not all psychedelic responses result in full mystical awareness--not that none do. Furthermore, as Masters and Houston point out, there is much evidence with which Zaehner does not deal which suggests that psychedelics do lead to "theistic" experiences.[81] The well known anthropologist, J. B. Slotkin, notes that during the peyote rituals of the Native American Church, participants often report the presence of Christ himself, and speak of hearing the voice of the "Great Spirit."[82] Finally, as Huston Smith notes, Zaehner is a Roman Catholic, a factor which may or may not directly influence his position. It should be recognized, however, that the Catholic church views mystical union as a gift of grace; that is, it is bestowed upon the chosen individual by God, and thus must be

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[81] Masters and Houston, op. cit., p. 257.

[82] See J. S. Slotkin, Peyote Religion (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1956), p. 75.

Zaehner, in a later book titled Drugs, Mysticism and Make-Believe, (London: Collins and Sons Ltd., 1972), p. 83, dismisses these accounts of the American Indians by simply assuming that what the Indians see is the human Jesus of Nazareth. One of Zaehner's problems is a tendency to assume off-hand what supports his thesis--a mistake he made repeatedly in analysing Huxley's The Doors of Perception.

considered to be beyond the control of men.[83] The states of consciousness induced by psychedelic drugs are, as has been suggested, controllable to a considerable degree. To an adherent of the teachings of the Chruch, this in itself might be enough to place psychedelic experience beyond the acceptable definition for true mystical states. In any case, as Smith further points out, one can easily maintain an interpretation of the different mystical states that implies an ontological or theological difference between the drug and non-drug related religious sensations while still recognizing that phenomenologically there appears to be no difference at all.[84] For those, however, who feel threatened by what they consider to be an overly easy and widespread "chemical" path to mystical religion, there can be no compromise. Thus, Zaehner remains adamant that there is no

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[83] See Huston Smith, "Do Drugs Have Religious Import?" op. cit., p. 523.

[84] Ibid. This is a fact recognized as early as 1857 by Fitzhugh Ludlow. Speaking of his hashish experiences he writes, "in the midst of sufferings unfathomable or raptures measureless, I often thought of St. Paul's God-given trance . . . for this alone harmonizes with that state of intuition in which the words are "speechless words," and the truths beheld have no symbol on earth which will embody them. Though far from believing that my own ecstasy, or that of any hasheesh-eater, has claim to such inspiration as an apostle's, the states are still analogous in this respect, that they both share the nature of disembodiment, and the soul, in both, beholds realities of greater or less significance, such as may never be apprehended again out of the light of eternity." The Hasheesh Eater, op. cit., p. 150.

similarity of importance between the two experiences--a position that the title of his latest book, Drugs, Mysticism and Make-Believe, confirms.

Regardless of the techniques mystics employ to achieve their visions, organized religion does not always regard them in a favorable light. This is not difficult to understand, given the fact that the mystic emphasizes the importance of his own "inner light," rather than the authoritative prescriptions of a pope or set of doctrines. That is, he is an individual who finds God directly, by-passing the intermediate mechanisms of church superstructures. In the past, this resulted in the harassment and persecution of mystics in a haphazard manner for they were few and far between. What are the implications, however, of a more widespread occurrence of mystical or visionary experience? That which, according to men like Huxley, might be beneficial to man's spiritual growth and thus his humanization might be considered to be an outright threat by the established churches.[85] The result is the condemnation of "instant religion" by the spokesmen of almost all established religions. Most of the complaints of the orthodox, however, (while effective with the majority of the faithful who bother with these matters) finally end as emotional rather than well reasoned. They rest on the opinion that , with the use of drugs, religious experiences become

[85]Society in general feels threatened in a similar way by drugs which change perception in such a manner as to seem to undercut basic values.

"artificial." God doesn't come in tablet form; there can be no true religious experience without God. One may be permitted to ask, however, what of all the saints and holy men and women who, through fasting, concentration, and even self-flagellation, brought about what are now officially recognized as genuine mystical states of consciousness? They did not know it at the time, but these mystics of old were also using techniques that altered body chemistry, and thus it could be said that they "artificially" facilitated the experience. The principle is the same; the difference is that psychedelic agents are faster, easier, and, from a medical standpoint, safer.

Most people are oblivious to the debate over the religious import of psychedelics. It is probable, however, that most would agree that it is profane to even suggest a connection between that which is deemed holy and a feared drug like LSD. This too is understandable, given the reputation which these substances have undeservedly acquired.[86] As a result, while our ancient ancestors might have found it natural to attribute the manifestations of a god to states of non-ordinary consciousness, most today are not even aware of the meaning of this concept, except, perhaps, to differentiate between sleeping and waking. One of the consequences of this ignorance of non-ordinary ways of experiencing the world is

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[86] See William Braden, "LSD and the Press," in Psychedelics, op. cit., pp. 400-418.

that modern religions (even more than in the past) are reduced to traditional symbols and their rather mundane emotional, intellectual, and ethical meanings. As such, their approach is literally worlds apart from what Huxley considers to be the deeper religious outlook of men and women who have direct, self-transcending insight into the divine nature of existence.

VI

Huxley was always fascinated by the effects, real and potential, of drugs. One might almost say that powerful, mind-changing drugs tended to become a sort of fetish for him--a cure all "magic-pill." One suspects that he was aware of his own weakness for the fantastic and balanced it quite adequately by a brillant critical ability. That is why his faith in the potential of psychedelic drugs should not be taken lightly or reduced to a mere biographical footnote.

As noted, Huxley believed that men sought self-transcendence and in its most positive form this expressed itself as a mystical yearning. The psychedelic, which he found so promising for the task of education, of heightening self-awareness and promoting tolerance, now demonstrated a religious importance. There can be little doubt that in his enthusiasm for such a drug he became convinced that, if correctly used, it could transofrm the mystical experience from a very rare to a rather common happening. Just as importantly,

this would also result in making more common a direct experiential base on which to rest the spiritual awareness necessary for any humanizing process of "amphibious" education.

How did Huxley believe the drug achieved its effect? It would seem that the key to the religious relevancy of the psychedelics lies in the drugs ability to achieve rapid ego-dissolution. For Huxley, a vital prerequisite to "cleansing the doors of perception" is the ability to "get out of one's own light." that is, to transcend the conditioned demands of a culture-bound ego. The psychedelics seem ready-made to facilitate this task. Within a matter of hours, one can be on one's way to being, as Alan Watts put it, "so peculiarly open and sensitive to organic reality that the ego begins to be seen for the transparent abstraction that it is. In its place there arises (especially in the latter phases of the drug experience) a strong sensation of oneness with others."[87] Upon experiencing this sensation, Huxley commented, "No separation between subject and object . . . subject and object--they are one."[88]

Rapid ego-dissolution, and the resultant sensitivity with the potential for mystical experience affords the individual what Huxley calls a "gratuitous grace."[89] That is,

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[87]Alan Watts, The Joyous Cosmology, op. cit., p. 96.

[88]Cited in Laura Huxley, This Timeless Moment, op. cit., p. 147. See also Letters, AH to H. Osmond, Oct. 24, 1955, p. 770.

[89]See AH, The Doors of Perception, op. cit., p. 58 and Laura Huxley, This Timeless Moment, op. cit., p. 135.

the religiously significant drug experience is neither necessary to, nor sufficient for the achievement of a permanent state of "amphibiousness" or spiritual enlightenment. It is, however, potentially very helpful in the achievement of this goal.[90] The individual is now faced with an important choice for it must be understood that it is only after such an experience that the hard work begins. It is at this point that one must decide whether to make full use of the "grace" and insights derived to transform one's everyday existence--the temporary state of deepened consciousness must be consumated by a conscious effort at restructuring one's own character. As Huxley so wisely observes, "Ethical and cognitive effort is needed if the experience is to go forward from [a] one-shot experience to permanent enlightenment."[91] This is a conclusion shared by many of the researchers into the religious import of psychedelics.[92]

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[90] AH, "Drugs That Shape Men's Minds," op. cit., p. 344.

[91] Letters, AH to M. Isherwood, August 12, 1959, op. cit., For Huxley enlightenment is only truly worthwhile within the context of daily life. In his book Aldous Huxley's Quest for Values (Knoxville: Univ. of Tenn. Press, 1971), Milton Birnbaum misses this important point completely. He comments that Huxley was prone to detach himself from the world, especially in his later years, in favor of unitive knowledge of God (p. 18). Yet it is clear that Huxley saw mysticism's worth in terms of life on earth. Thus, as Laura Huxley recounts in This Timeless Moment, Aldous Huxley would insist, "Again and again! No dropping out from Love and Work, even from an unsatisfactory society, into personal isolated security of Pure Light with or without psychedelics." op. cit., p. 176.

[92] For instance, Huston Smith notes in "Do Drugs Have Religious Import?" "The conclusion to which the evidence currently points would seem to be that chemicals can aid the

Hence there is an important need for the integration of the psychedelic experience (as well as, for that matter, non-psychedelic religious experiences)[93] into an on-going, humanized educational process, the feasibility of which Huxley tries to demonstrate in Island. When such drug assisted experience is combined with other techniques to heighten awareness, and promote tolerance and compassion, Huxley believes we begin to approach a level of operation which he referred to as "the supreme art of life"--the art of:

> passing at will from obscure knowledge to conceptualized, utilitarian knowledge, from the aesthetic to the mystical; and all the time to be able, in the words of the Zen master, to grasp the non-particulars that exist in particulars, to be aware of the not-thought which lies in thought--the absolute relationships, the infinite in finite things, the eternal in time.94

At that point, education in general would have made much progress in achieving what some religions (at their best) have

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religious life, but only where set within a context of faith (meaning by this the conviction that what they disclose is true) and discipline (meaning diligent exercise of the will in the attempt to work out the implications of the disclosures for the living of life in the every day, common sense world)." op. cit., p. 168. See also, Aiken, "The Church of the Awakening," in Psychedelics, op. cit., p. 181. Watts, The Joyous Cosmology, op. cit., pp. 25-26 and Stafford and Golightly, LSD--Problem Solving Psychedelic, op. cit., p. 147.

[93] Huxley writes in Ends and Means, "From the humanistic point of view, religious practices are valuable in so far as they provide methods of self-education, methods which men can use to transform their characters and enlarge their consciousness." Op. cit., pp. 267-268.

[94] Letters, AH to Victoria Ocampo, July 19, 1956, op. cit., p. 802.

been trying (largely in theory) to accomplish for centuries--to develop the perceptual outlook of the common man in such a direction that life becomes sacred and interrelationships manifest themselves as, essentially, acts of love.

VII

There are two central facts that should be kept in mind when considering Huxley's attitude towards drugs and mysticism. One is his recognition of mankind's strong and consistent record of seeking out self-transcending experiences (as often as not through the use of drugs)--a factor upon which he placed great emphasis.[95] The other is the equally strong and persistent predilection to give meaning to life through religion or religious-like passions. Time and again the two themes have converged, both deriving added impetus from a single source--the universal desire to at once escape from and yet give import to everyday existence.

History is full of examples of the negative manifestation of these two drives (opium wars and inquisitions, to name two). In Huxley's eyes nationalism taps an almost religious enthusiasm yet even this does not render any less vacuous the lives of many caught in the gross materialism of "mass" technological society. Many of these people seek escape from their alientation through the negative use of,

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[95]AH, The Doors of Perception, op. cit., p. 49.

among other things, drugs of all descriptions, Huxley sought an alternative to what he interpreted as the channeling of religious-like passions toward secular ideologies on the one hand, and the use of drugs in an undirected, negative effort to escape alienation on the other. His hope was to recombine the two means of self-transcendence, drugs and religion, in a controlled and positive manner within the modern context--the aim being to make mystical experience much more common. He is, once more, true to the necessity of having theory accompanied by appropriate practice.

What would be the popular response? Huxley's feeling is that eventually it would be favorable. He is convinced that in the case of drugs such as psychedelics, what mankind is primarily after is the self-transcending experiences that they render possible. Ultimately, then, such a drug that can at the same time facilitate religious experience fulfills a deep seated need in man. Thus, Huxley believes that if made available in a controlled fashion, within the context of a program that familiarized the user with the effects of the drug, these agents would come to be accepted in the way he wished them to be:

> My own belief is that, though they may start by being something of an embarassment, these new mind changers will tend in the long run to deepen the spiritual life of the communities in which they are available. That famous "revival of religion", about which so many people have been taking for so long, will not come about as the result of evangelistic mass meetings or the television appearances of photogenic clergymen.

> It will come about as a result of biochemcial discoveries that will make it possible for large numbers of men and women to achieve a radical self-transcendence and a deeper understanding of the nature of things. And this revival of religion will be at the same time a revolution. From being an activity mainly concerned with symbols, religion will be transformed into an acitivity concerned mainly with experience and intuition--an everyday mysticism underlying and giving significance to everyday rationality, everyday tasks and duties, everyday human relationships.96

The key to his hopes lies in the realization of a program that channels their use in the proper "amphibious" direction. The coming about of such a program under present circumstances in both East and West is doubtful at best. Yet despite the remoteness of any such program, Huxley's long-term optimism as expressed above caused him to invest much energy in his later years in an effort at demonstrating that a melding of religion and psychedelics was practicable and of immense potential benefit. It is to the product of this effort that we now turn.

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[96]AH, "Drugs that Shape Men's Minds," in Collected Essays, op. cit., p. 346.

CHAPTER V

ISLAND

By the early 1950's, Huxley had rounded out the worldview to which he would adhere throughout the rest of life (he died in 1963).[1] He began to seriously consider a novel which would systematically present this worldview, through a picture of a community designed to nurture "amphibious," spiritually aware individuals.[2] The result was Island, which Huxley liked to describe as a "topian rather than a utopian phantasy, a phantasy dealing with a place, a real place and time, rather than a phantasy dealing with no place and time."[3] As we will see this is not quite an accurate description of Island for it is hard to imagine anywhere, under present conditions, where what the book portrays could become "real." Nevertheless, Huxley wants his ideal to be thought of as potentially realizable in the

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[1]By this time Huxley relegates his cynicism to what he interprets as the futile and self-defeating strivings of mass-society while, on the other hand, expressing a degree of optimism (which had been building in him since the beginning of World War Two--see Letters, AH to K. Martin, July 30, 1939, op. cit., p. 444) when it came to small scale, cooperative enterprises.

[2]This project had been forming in his mind at least as early as 1940. See Letters, AH to Julian Huxley, April 24, 1940, op. cit., p. 453 and AH to H. Raymond, Oct. 14, 1940, op. cit., p. 460. See also George Woodcook, Dawn and the Darkest Hour, op. cit., p. 268.

[3]Quoted in Bedford, II, op. cit., p. 241.

here and now--at least in particulars. Thus, all the positive and humane components of the community portrayed by Huxley are practicable and possible if man chooses to make them so. He worked on the book full time throughout the latter half of the 1950's,[4] although if one surveys his writings from the 1920's onward, it is evident that, in a trial and error way, all leads to this last major effort.

Island, then, may be seen as a direct outcome of Huxley's personal search for mankind's raison d'etre. In the 1920's as we have seen, he sought life's meaning in art and intellectual pursuits. Finding this unsatisfying, he threw himself into the world of political action for the pacifist cause of the 1930's. Here too he became frustrated. The approaches to life of the artist-intellectual and those of the political activist appeared to be the two horns of a dilemma. One horn seemed to point to an "ivory tower" approach to dealing with pressing social problems, while the other often led to more pragmatic, but very anti-human solutions, be they in the form of mass-democracy, facism, or totalitarian communism.[5] It was in search of a solution to this dilemma that, in the 1940's, Huxley began his indepth study of mysticism. This was almost simultaneously accompanied by a refocusing back on subjects like politics, economics,

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[4]See Letters, AH to H. Osmond, June 22, 1958, op. cit., p. 850.

[5]See Letters, AH to V. Ocampo, April 2, 1945, op. cit., p. 518.

science and education, but from a standpoint the parameters of which were now defined by a humanistic mysticism. "It is always a question of seeking first the kingdom of heaven so that all the rest shall be added."[6] Man must achieve spiritual awareness and the love and charity it brings, before he can proceed to revolutionize the world socially, politically and economically. If he attempts the latter first, hoping against hope that the new world thus attained will be one of love and charity, he is wrong, and indeed, utopian in his outlook. "Brute experience and the records of history make it sufficiently clear that [this] utopian way leads to hell."[7] Between the horns of the dilemma lay an alternative--the possibility of "applied spirituality" and, in a practical politico-economic sense, a corresponding social system (in the form of decentralism and cooperative enterprise) to complement that spirituality.[8]

The problem, was that most intellectuals and politicians, to say nothing of the average man on the street, did not recognize these alternatives as valid or, in many cases, as even existing. Therefore, having convinced himself of the viability of individual mystical revelation and decentralism as a dual basis for a more humane approach to everyday

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[6] Ibid., AH to K. Roberts, Nov. 26, 1940, op. cit., p. 462.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., see also AH to V. Ocampo, April 2, 1945, Ibid., p. 518.

existence, Huxley spent a good part of his remaining years working the details of this alternative into a socially acceptable and disseminatable form. He elaborates on the task in the following way:

> Man's collective mind has a high degree of viscosity and flows from one position to another with the relcutant deliberation of an ebbing tide of sludge. But in a world of exploding population increase, of headlong technological advance and militant nationalism, the time at our disposal is strictly limited. We must discover, and discover very soon . . . better solvents for liquefying the sludgy stickiness of an anachronistic state of mind. On the verbal level an education in the nature and limitations, the uses and abuses of language; on the wordless level an education in mental silence and pure receptivity; and finally, through the use of harmless psychedelics, a course of chemically triggered conversion experiences or ecstasies - these I believe will provide all the sources of mental energy, all the solvents of conceptual sludge, that an individual requires. With their aid he should be able to adapt himself selectively to his culture . . . If the number of such individuals is sufficiently high, they may be able to pass from discriminating acceptance of their culture to discriminating change and reform. Is this a hopefully utopian dream? Experiment can give us the answer for the dream is pragmatic: the utopian hypothesis can be tested empirically.9

Island is an outline for this experiment.

Finally, it should be noted that Island is the work of a man who feels himself to have come close to achieving personal salvation. The cynical "Jesting Pilate" that was Huxley of the twenties and early thirties has given way to a compassionate, "amphibious" individual. Physical frustrations

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[9]AH, "Culture and the Individul," in Solomon, op. cit., pp. 47-48.

and the sometimes obstructive nature of his "erormous rationalizing brain" (as Humphry Osmond once put it) has now been overcome to the point where he can see great positive potential in each individual. Island becomes a testimony in fiction to this evolution in Huxley.

In general, the novel describes a society which, while constructed around the teachings of the Mayahanna Buddhists, at the same time encorporates the best of Western scientific and technological knowledge.[10] Several assumptions underlie this melding of East and West. One is that man is of a malleable character--sufficiently malleable to allow for a radical reconstruction of society within a relatively short period of time (three or four generations).[11] Whether this is indeed possible except under the most totalitarian of conditions is questionable, and such conditions Huxley would certainly not advocate. His explicit belief that science, controlled by dictators, can quickly and decisively help dehumanize civilization must be kept in mind here. Implicit in it is its reverse--that science can just as quickly and decisively affect life positively when in the hands of good-willed and "enlightened" men. That most would comply with the wishes of "enlightened" leaders seems never to be questioned by Huxley. Given the assumption of

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[10]This melding is emphasized in C. Holmes, Aldous Huxley and the Way to Reality, op. cit., p. 181.

[11]See AH, Ends and Means, op. cit., pp. 21-23, and p. 93.

malleability, Huxley is also led to assume that circumstances help make the good man as well as the bad.[12] Not only can a society organize itself to minimize temptations to abuse power, but, positively speaking, it can maximize opportunities for people to act well. The people depicted in Island do just this and thereby transform many of those negative techniques of social engineering found in Brave New World into positive means to well-rounded human existence.

All this sounds like the high hopes of a well-intentioned behaviorist--a strange role for Huxley who did not have too many good things to say about B. F. Skinner and his followers. Yet Island places Huxley in a paradoxical position. The population depicted seems to be "bred" to enlightenment while living within a community that greatly treasures individual uniqueness. Likewise, no one in the community would ever consider bothering a dissenter, but among those born and raised in this society one can't help but feeling that dissenion simply makes no sense. Huxley has created a world the result of which (within the terms of his goal of "amphibious" man) parallels Skinner's Walden Two, Skinner is frank about his "breeding" while Huxley seems to want to "breed" only indirectly through a series of humanizing techniques. Leaving aside the question of whether or not Huxley's techniques are in fact humanizing, one can ask if,

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[12] Ibid., p. 117, see also After Many a Summer, op. cit., pp. 244-245.

ultimately, Island is not an exercise in behaviorism?

II

The tone of the book is established in the very first paragraph. A Mynah bird is calling "Attention," and throughout the entire text these trained talking birds of Pala, the Southeast Asian island community that is the scene of Huxley's fantasy, call its people to live in the here and now, rather than in terms of past-conditioned fears or future-oriented hopes. This reflects Huxley's belief in the Eastern mystical teaching which prevails upon the individual to be constantly attune, in a non-attached way, to life as it exists at the moment.[13] This applies, as far as possible, to all three levels of existence: the physical, the mental, and the spiritual. Huxley makes this attitude the cornerstone of the Palanese life-style, as he tried to make it the cornerstone of his own. For instance, Laura Huxley writes of her husband's last days:

> . . . it sustained him when he was dying. But during those last weeks I did not fully realize that he was, once again, practicing what he preached: to live here and now, whether you were to die tomorrow or in a hundred years!14

Within the context of the novel, it is the central figure, Will Farnaby, that the birds first speak to. Huxley

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[13]See Laura Huxley, This Timeless Moment, op. cit., pp. 169 and 196-197. Also, Those Barren Leaves, op. cit., pp. 114-115.

[14]Laura Huxley, This Timeless Moment, op. cit., p. 244.

will draw Farnaby as the intelligent Western man personified: cynical, aggressive, out for profit, yet, underneath it all, a conscience and a yearning for self-betterment. Caught in a world his own actions have helped make ugly and dehumanized, he is confronted with a choice. His sojourn in Pala is to symbolically represent the catalytic happening that brings to momentary consciousness the scope of one'e positive potential as well as the path to its realization. Choosing to take the path, however, necessitates the abandonment of modern Western notions of success. The Farnaby figure is not just a clever literary device for Huxley. The dilemma in which he is portrayed represents, for the author, the reality facing every aware individual in an increasingly inhuman world.

Farnaby, a Western newspaper reporter, lies hurt from a fall he expereinces while trying to climb the cliffs of the island's coast after his boat went awash. Lying in a half-stupor, his mind wanders. First he is haunted by the memory of the snake that had frightened him into falling. Then he recalls an older, more persistently plaguing memory of a former love whom he had cruelly driven away, distraught, into a rainy London night. She had been fatally injured within an hour in a car crash, leaving Will with a deep sense of guilt. Both memories stand as roadblocks to his ability to live fully here and now. In Pala, he learns to purge both of their negative, emotionally addictive quality.

Huxley wastes little time in turning fiction towards a didactic line of discourse, something the critics have noted with displeasure. Huxley made it a policy never to read the reviews of his own work, however, and , in any case, his main aim is to demonstrate his many techniques for "right living" in action. Will (and the reader) receives his first lesson from the little Palanese girl, Mary Sarojini MacPhail, who first discovers him. After learning what has happened and sending for help, she works a bit of psycho-therapy on him. When something or someone frightens a person on Pala the memory is not allowed to be suppressed only to work subversively on the psyche through the subconscious. Rather, as Mary causes Will to do, the memory is brought forth into conscious awareness frankly and factually. This is repeated until it ceases to be painfull--to be of such potency as to deflect one's ability for well-adjusted living in the present.[15]

Well on his way to becoming psychologically safe from the traumatic memory of the fall, Will receives treatment for his physical injuries from Mary's grandfather, Dr. Robert MacPhail. He is a descendent of the original Westerner, Dr. Andrew MacPhail, who first came to Pala over two hundred years before. Andrew, in partnership with the Rajah of the day, started the process of merging the best of East and West.

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[15]AH, Island, op. cit., pp. 15-17.

During his convalescence Will meets MacPhail's daughter-in-law, (Mary's mother) Susila, who has recently lost her husband in a mountain climbing accident. She, too, must try to overcome a grief-filled memory in order to make the best of the present. These characters display Huxley's feeling that the problem of living well involves learning the proper way of dealing with grief.[16] This can be done best through an awareness of the interconnected nature of living and dying (an attitude Huxley felt he had come to full understanding of through a study of Eastern philosophies); an awareness which, as will be seen, is taught to everyone on Pala both on an intellectual and (with the aid of psychedelics) emotional level. Death is not a taboo--it is not dwelled upon ("sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof") but frankly accepted as part of the nature of things. Susila, born and raised on Pala, realizes this and must now struggle to put her principles into practice. Will must acquire this outlook as something new and difficult. Susila is appointed by her father-in-law to look after Will, and the two help each other to overcome their pasts. Thus Huxley shows what can be done with individuals given proper education (Susila) or even merely the influence of more humane surroundings (Will).

Susila continues the use of psycho-therapy on Will. In Pala, the approach to all happenings is amphibious--it

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[16]Huxley would be in agreement with the approach taken towards dying by E. Kubler-Ross in her book On Death and Dying (N.Y.: Macmillan, 1970), passim.

is an accepted fact that what effects one level of man also effects all the others (a la Alexander). Will's mind is now focused on the pain of his injury. Susila knows, as do all Palanese, that in the case of injury, if the body is to be in the best state to cooperate with medication, the conscious mind must cease to interfere (through worry) with the natural healing capacities of what Huxley terms the "physiological not-self."[17] Thus, in his darkened room, Susila directs Will's mind to beautiful places he has known in his native England. The demoralizing pre-occupation with pain is deflected in such a way to be not an escape into the past, but rather a reminder that beauty and love persist despite pain and injury. Speaking slowly and rhythmically, Susila puts Will into a light sleep within which he is open to suggestions from her voice. Then, indirectly, she gives him suggestions to the effect that his temperature will normalize and the injured leg quickly heal.[18]

Huxley is, once more, drawing from his own life experiences. Hypnosis and auto-suggestoin had long been among his interests. They are examples of many practices he feels are open to the individual who wishes to become more self-aware and in greater self-control. On many occasions he

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[17]See AH, "The Education of an Amphibian," in Adonis and the Alphabet, op. cit., pp. 30-32.

[18]AH, Island, op. cit., pp. 34-35.

advocates Hronell Hart's book Autoconditioning[19] and had himself taken part in psychological studies utilizing hypnosis.[20]

While Will is recuperating, we are introduced to MacPhail and his situation, as well as to a bit of Pala's past and present circumstances. "Dr. Robert" has a grief of his own; his wife is dying of a malignancy. It is grief with which Will is all too familiar for, as a child, he witnessed the slow death from cancer of an aunt, the only person he ever really loved. Here Huxley sets the scene for a comparison of what he considers human and dehumanizing ways of dying. In the West, where death is something of a taboo and life is lived in psuedo-ignorance or fear of it, the dying process is often a shattering horror. So it was with Will's aunt, who was transformed by her suffering and the unexpected knowledge of impending death from a kindly, self-sacrificing, lover of life into a self-pitying, anger-filled creature lamenting and the unfairness of her fate. MacPhail's wife, on the other hand, has come, through Buddhist training and psychedelic experiences, to look upon death as a great and inevitable self-transcending experience. Huxley again puts much that it autobiographical into Island at this point.

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[19]Hornell Hart, Autoconditioning (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1956).

[20]See M. Erickson, MD, "A Special Inquiry with Aldous Huxley into the Nature of Various States of Consciousness," in American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis, No. 8 (1965), pp. 14-33.

Laura Huxley points out that there is great similarity between the picture Huxley paints of MacPhail's wife Lakshmi's final hours and those of the author's first wife Maria.[21]

Huxley's novel embodies his fascination with both the agony and enlightened potential inherent in human life. Island is literally full of sickness, death and symbols of what Huxley referred to as the "essential horror" of existence. This is balanced, however, by the constant striving after the goal of "good being" through "transcendental pragmatism." This end guides all of Pala's social and educational systems and thus the book does not appear morbid. For instance, Palanese philosophy does not only facilitate the acceptance of death, accident and sickness but, first and foremost, it attempts to facilitate the enjoyment and enrichment of life. We learn that Dr. MacPhail and his wife are two very different types of people. MacPhail is portrayed as a quiet medical man, scientist, and intellectual, as compared to his wife who is an extroverted, life-loving person who relates to the world in a direct emotional way.[22] It is the type of dissimilarity that does not always signal a compatible marriage. However, because Huxley has them both coming from a community that "teaches"

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[21]Laura Huxley, This Timeless Moment, op. cit., pp. 20-25 and 147-148.

[22]Again, there is much that is autobiographical here for the relationship of MacPhail and his wife corresponds in many ways to that of Huxley and his first wife Maria.

tolerance and compassion we get the idea that such marriages can be much more commonly successful. What the author is really saying is that modern Western society, with its increasing divorce rate, lives by ethical codes and under social arrangements that decrease, rather than increase man's ability to establish loving relationships. He sees no reason why this must necessarily be so. Self-awareness, which, he asserts, can be developed in a systematic way and on a community-wide scale can give people the capacity to overcome their differences in personality, outlook and temperament.

This compatability of different personality types on an individual level is analogous to, and in some ways a function of, the achievement of a compatible relationship between Eastern and Western characteristics on the societal level. Huxley was convinced that a key to humanizing man's condition lie in learning the lessons of both Eastern and Western development--to discriminately and systematically utilize what is positive from both. The Eastern philosophies taught what he considered to be the reality of "suchness," or as he put it in The Doors of Perception, the existence of "Mind at Large" which is representative of the divine harmony of the universe. The West, on the other hand, has demonstrated the importance of the fact that the human being who ultimately partakes of "Mind at Large" is also a physiological being. Both the biological self and the spiritual self must

be taken into account. Huxley desires to take the yogic and other aspects of Oriental psychology with its metaphysical basis and supplement them with Sheldon, Bates, Alexander and the myriad positive aspects of the Western scientific achievement. He has advocated just this time and again in his non-fiction but only in fiction could he clearly picture the potential results. Thus, Pala uses Western technology to make life comfortable, secure and intellectually stimulating. To this it adds the Eastern philosophy of applied mysticism--the ability to be in direct contact with internal and external reality.

Will learns something of this underlying Eastern outlook (which, in effect, humanizes Western learning) when Dr. MacPhail, on his way to visit his wife, hands him a book to read. The book is entitled Notes on What's What, and on What it Might be Reasonable to do About What's What. It was written by one of the past leaders of Pala known as the "Old Raja." From this Will gets an idea of the theory behind Pala's practice and the reader gets an idea of Huxley's everyday ethic of personal awareness. Paraphrased, the Notes tell Will:

> 1. The minimization of life's frustration and sorrows only come with full self-knowledge of what we are. Such knowledge results in "Good Being" which then is followed by "good doing".
>
> 2. To know who we are we must, every moment, recognize who we wishfully think we are and what this "bad habit

> of thought" makes us think and do. Moments of such insightful awareness must be strung together until they are a continuous thread. "So be aware - aware in every context, at all times and whatever . . . you may be doing or suffering. This is the only genuine yoga, the only spiritual exercise worth practicing."
>
> 3. There is a difference between faith and belief. Belief is taking unanalysed words so seriously that you would kill for them. Man's history is all too often the history of belief. Faith, on the other hand, is a justified confidence in our capacity to know who we are and act accordingly - to achieve "Good Being".23

What Huxley is calling for here is the application of rigorous principles of intellection honesty towards the self.

As Will continues to read, he is suddenly interrupted by the young present-day prince, a boy named Murugan, who is but days away from coming of age and therefore of becoming the new Raja. Murugan is a variation on the theme of Brave New World's savage. Although a native of Pala, circumstances have imbued him with the worst qualities of the modern world. Murugan has been raised by a possessive and self-righteous mother, the Rani. Neither she nor her son have ever made the effort to absorb or even come to understand the Palanese way of life. As such both he and his mother are alien forms whose presence in Pala constitute a fatal malignancy. The Rani heads an evangelistic organization called the "Crusade of the Spirit." Huxley makes her a representative of "false" spirituality that type of dogmatic personality that feels it

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[23]AH, Island, op. cit., pp. 38-40. The notion of "Good Being" is also taken up by Huxley in After Many a Summer, op. cit., pp. 119-122.

personifies the one esoteric path to right living and religious truth, which all must follow whether they like it or not. She is the perfect example of what Huxley means when he says,

> "Turning to God without turning from self" - the formula is absurdly simple; and yet simple as it is, it explains all the follies and iniquities committed in the name of religion.24

The Rani is backed by Pala's power-hungry neighbor, the military dictator, Col. Dipa. Dipa is one of several characters in the book who are representative of "the real world" as Huxley sees it. Huxley is uncompromising in his portrayal of this "real" life: greed, blindness and self-destructiveness prevail. Did he really believe the world to be full of Murugans, Dipas and the like? The answer is probably yes, although in Island Huxley isolates and emphasizes their negativity for the sake of contrast with the even greater number of human beings striving to live in a relatively decent manner. In any case, Dipa wants to annex Pala and, as a first step to this, he has taken Murugan as his protégé, filling his head full of ideas about "modernization" and "progress". Thus we are shown that while the Old Raja was a fully self-aware human being whose guidance led Pala to develop along the lines of "amphibian" priorities, the present prince represents the fatal egotism of total abandonment to the superficial self. Murugan spends his time reading not Notes

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[24]AH, The Perennial Philosophy, op. cit., p. 243. By "self" Huxley does not mean the whole psycho-physical animal, but rather the self-centered "ego".

on What's What, but rather a Sears-Roebuck catalogue.[25] The choice open to Western man, as Huxley sees it, becomes Murugan's as well as Farnaby's.

Col. Dipa has convinced Murugan that the best way to "modernize" Pala is to open it to exploitation by Western oil companies. It so happens that Will has been authorized by his publisher, Lord Aldenhyde (a superstitous believer in the occult and an admirer of the Rani) to try and deal with the Rani and Murugan for oil rights for a company he owns. Aldehyde is yet another representative of the "real world," of what is as against what can be. If Will obtains these rights for Aldehyde he will be rewarded with a year off with pay to enjoy the "high art" he loves so much.[26] Murugan and Will are now joined by the Rani and Col. Dipa's ambassador to Pala, Mr. Bahu. Bahu is a highly educated, clever man.

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[25] In "Man and Reality" Huxley writes, "Human history is a record of conflict between two forces--on the one hand, the silly and criminal presumption that makes man ignorant of his glassy essence; on the other, the recognition that, unless he lives in conformity with the greater cosmos, he himself is utterly evil, and his world, a nightmare." Vedanta for the Western World, op. cit., p. 274. Murugan's "presumptiousness" is "silly" while Dipa's is "criminal". On the other hand, the Old Raja and Dr. MacPhail are the picture of that wisdom that brings "conformity with the greater cosmos."

[26] Will will have to learn what, in real life, Huxley himself realized, "As a Young man, I cared supremely for knowledge for its own sake, for the play of ideas, for the arts of literature, painting and music. But for some years now I have felt a certain dissatisfaction with these things, have felt that even the greatest masterpieces were somehow inadequate. Recently, I have begun to know something about the reality in relation to which such things as art and general knowledge can be appraised. Inadequate in and for themselves, these activities

He is the novel's representative "whore of reason," and thus lends a fatally cynical set of rationalizations to Murugan's naive desire to transform Pala into an amalgamation of oil fields, Calcutta slums, and suburban shopping centers.[27] In a certain way there is something autobiographical about the character Bahu who is obviously in a straight line of descent with Mustafa Mond of Brave New World and Dr. Obispo of After Many a Summer. These characters are what Huxley could potentially be if he ever allowed that cynical "Jesting Pilate" part of him to become dominant and work itself out to its logical conclusion. Perhaps this is why he can handle such characters in so convincing a fashion. Bahu is of the opinion that, although Pala has achieved a state in itself admirable, it is now out of step with the rest of mankind and thus hopelessly archaic. When Pala had been geographically isolated, its ideal social organization had been viable. Now, however, having come to the attention of the modern world, its concepts of freedom and happiness, existing in the face

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of the mind can be seen in their true perspective when looked at from the vantage point of mysticism." Letters, AH to Miss Hepworth and Mr. Green, 1942, op. cit., p. 474.

[27]AH, Island, op. cit., pp. 57-59. Bahu is the last in a string of Huxley's characters of this type. Some others are Mr. Cardan in Those Barren Leaves, and Dr. Obispo in After Many a Summer. Bahu is also the 20th Century forrunner of Brave New World's Controller, Mustafa Mond. Mond, of course, would have tidied up the oil fields and done away with the slums but only to better concentrate on the shoping centers.

of the outside world's overwhelming misery, strike Bahu as "a deliberate affront to the rest of humanity."[28]

Will agrees with at least one of Bahu's many arguments--the wave of the future would most likely be a wave of crude petroleum. He is convinced that Murugan and his allies will succeed and Pala will be changed. Not yet sufficiently influenced by Palanese ways that he would reconsider his plans for taking advantage of what he feels is an inevitability in any case, Will initiates negotiations with the Rani and Bahu on behalf of Lord Aldehyde.

However, Pala does not allow Will to continue on what, for Huxley, is an extreme representation of those expedient but morally questionable paths which most people pursue, to one extent or another, in their own daily lives. It is his fate to learn what a truly human society can be like.

The Rani and her entourage leave and their place is taken by a young nurse named Radha who has come to give Will an injection. Radha explains Palanese medicine to Will. As we learned from Susila's actions, it is based on the belief that the mind and body are an interconnected whole. Thus, for the Palanese, it is nonsense to, on one hand, know how to fix the body and, on the other, not teach people to live in such a manner as to not need as much fixing in the first place. "So whether its prevention or whether its cure, we

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[28]AH, Island, op. cit., p. 59.

attack on all the fronts at once. All the "fronts" Radha insists, "from diet to autosuggestion, from negative ions to meditation,"[29] Huxley goes on to compare this approach to the Western one. In psychiatry, for instance, Western doctors often abstract the mind from the body. Then they abstract still more by an exclusive concentration on the negative aspects of the subconscious. Here again Huxley supports the theories of Sheldon and Alexander when Radha complains that Western doctors in general do not concern themselves with the relation of body type and personality, or with an individual's proper or improper use of his body. This comparative narrative presents Huxley's opinion that Western medicine is, at best, a partially and lopsidedely-developed science. It also allows him to demonstrate a way in which a society can incorporate instruction in basic medical truths into its educational system as part of an attempt to teach the psycho-physical basis for self-awareness.

From medicine, the discussion turns to sexual attitudes. Sex is not a hidden or shameful subject on Pala, nor is it something people snicker about. Healthy and frank sexual attitudes are not only encouraged on the island, but they are taught both in theory and in practice. In short, Palanese youth learn that which Huxley calls the "yoga of love" or what the Palanese term "maithuna,"[30] Again, Huxley turns

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[29] Ibid., p. 68.

[30] Ibid., pp. 76-79.

to the East for a solution to the problem of inculcating what he considers healthy sexual attitudes. Specifically, he utilizes ancient tantric principles by which one is taught to diffuse sexuality and sexual sensation thorughout the whole body. By treating sex as a form of yoga, Huxley can view it as yet another agent of spiritual englightenment. The "yoga of love" really "gets people there," Radha tells Will. He naturally asks, where is there? Radha replies, "tat tvam asi - thou art That, and so am I: That is me."[31]

Palanese medical and sexual attitudes are influenced by an open and humane Buddhism. The Palanese are Mahayanists, and thus do not try to escape or deny the material world. On the contrary, they accept it and make use of it in their quest for enlightenment. They are taught, both in and out of school, that illness, love--in fact everything one does or encounters--can be turned into a means of focusing attention on the divine reality of life. For example, when the Palanese sit down to a meal, grace is "chewed." The first bite is ritualistically masticated until nothing is left undissolved. Throughout this process, one is attentive to the food's flavour, consistency, temperature, the pressure on the teeth, etc. "Attention" is Huxley's point. As one of his characters explains:

> "When you've learned to pay closer attention to more of the not-you in the environment (that's the food)

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[31] Ibid., p. 78.

> and more of the not-you in your own organism (that's your taste sensations), you may suddenly find yourself paying attention to the not-you on the further side of consciousness.32

The Palanese form of Buddhism is also manifested in the fact that all their religious and philosophical textbooks are texts on applied philosophy and applied religion. Both areas are operational and pragmatic. Here, as with most of the other techniques espoused in the novel, Huxley is trying to do something about his old complaint: we are constantly exhorted to "be good" by parents, teachers, preachers, politicans, reformers of all kinds. However, "oddly enough, nobody ever tells us how to be good."[33] The exercises and operations taught by these Palanese textbooks are psychophysical, and the results are transcendental. Huxley uses a discussion between Radha, her boyfriend Ranga, and Will to compare Pala and the West in this respect--that is, once more, to compare what is as against what can be. "Your metaphysicians" says Ranga, "make statements about the nature of man and the universe; but they don't offer the reader any way of testing the truth of those statements. When we make statements, we follow them up with a list of operations that can be used for testing the validity of what we've been saying.[34] Diffused through educational and religious systems,

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[32] Ibid., p. 198.

[33] AH, "Human Potentialities," in Julian Huxley, ed., The Humanist Frame (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1961), p. 427.

[34] AH, Island, op. cit., p. 76.

the techniques of Zen, maithuna, yoga, and other mediatative exercises are used on a community-wide basis. These practices (and the attitude of making the best of all worlds) make the Palanese realize that nothing short of full amphibious development is acceptable, regardless of one's specific interests or specializations.

This attitude is put into practice within an atmosphere of maximum individual and social flexibility. It is, as we have seen, Huxley's belief that decentralism and cooperative enterprise is the economic and political arrangement most conducive to attaining full enlightenment. In 1946, he made a statement that expresses this requirement as he later portrayed it in Island:

> Now it seems pretty obvious that man's psychological, to say nothing of his spiritual, needs cannot be fulfilled unless, first he has a fair measure of personal independence and personal responsibility within and toward a self-governing group, unless, secondly, his work possesses a certain aesthetic value and human significance, and unless, in the third place, he is related to his natural environment in some organic, rooted and symbiotic way.35

How does Huxley accomplish this within the context of Pala? One example may be found in the structure of the Palanese family, where there are no rigidly enforced parental relationships.[36] Children are not involuntarily confined to

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[35]AH, Science, Liberty and Peace, op. cit., p. 27. With respect to enumerating the prerequisites for a successful small scale human community, Huxley was quite practical, see Ends and Means, op. cit., pp. 159-160 and The Perennial Philosophy, op. cit., pp. 95-96.

[36]AH, Island, op. cit., pp. 90-92.

one family unit. "Escape" for them--to be used when they feel they need it--is built into the system. Each nuclear family is part of a larger group known as a "Mutual Adoption Club" with twenty or so members. Whenever home life becomes unbearable, a child is free to migrate for a time to one of his or her "other families". The clubs are made up of all sorts of couples: newly weds, established or growing families, grandparents or great-grandparents. Thus, even those older people who can no longer work are still intimately integrated into a vital community activity. Furthermore, women find in child-raising the support necessary to allow them to broaden their interests; at the same time, their children have a very necessary pressure valve. In this way, friction between generations tends to be diffused and stabilized, and mutual understanding is increased.

The flexibility which is inherent in this type of communal family structure is carried through to the political and economic levels.[37] First it should be noted that Palanese society rests on two solid pillars: a limited population and a more than sufficient food supply. Though Huxley raises the issue of adequate food supplies and population control numerous times in his writing, it is obvius that these are two things notably lacking in many parts of the "real world." Huxley believes them technologically achievable, however,

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[37] Ibid., pp. 144-156.

and thus encorporates both into Island (again, how to make the jump from Pala to the actual world is not outlined). In any case, these pillars assure a certain minimum level of comfort and stability. On this base, the Palanese have constructed a system of economics which is neither socialist nor capitalist, but rather an elaboration on the concept of mutual aid, encompassing "co-operative techniques for buying and selling and profit sharing and financing."[38] This co-operative village or community approach to making a living and running one's government affairs tends to free the individual from fears of destitution, in addition to giving his work an added sense of importance.[39] He knows that he works not only for the good of himself and his family, but for the good of his community--for the sustaining of a way of life. Furthermore, Pala's limited production of gold gives a solid backing to her currency, supplements exports,

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[38] Ibid., p. 145. Also see Ends and Means where he writes, "In practice this small-scale industrial democracy, this self-government for all, is intrinsically most compatible with business organizations of the . . . co-operative and mixed [types]. It is almost equally incompatible with capitalism and state socialism.

"Co-operatives and mixed concerns already exist and work extremely well. To increase their numbers and to extend their scope would not seem a revolutionary act, in the sense that it would not provoke the violent opposition which men feel towards projects involving an entirely new principle. In its effects, however, the act would be revolutionary; for it would result in a profound modification of the existing system." op. cit., p. 85.

[39] Laurence Brander's criticism that "Pala apparently had no administrative services at all" betrays a too literal reading on his part. A communal approach to administrative

and allows for the cash purchase of expensive equipment. The economic system of the island is specifically arranged to achieve self-sufficiency[40] and guard against the rise of "captains of industry" or great financial empires. Maximum efficiency is not the first principle of Pala's light industry (there is no heavy industry mentioned) rather work is geared to "human satisfaction". People are encouraged to train for many skills and rotate jobs freely in order to avoid alienation in their work.[41] It is in Island, then, that Huxley seeks to roughly sketch the answers to a series of perplexing economic problems. For example, in 1950 he wrote:

> We need a new system of money that will deliver us from servitude t o the banks and permit people to buy what they are able to produce; and we need a new system of ownership that will check the tendency towards monopoly in land and make it impossible to lay waste the planetary resources which belong to all mankind.42

In dealing with these questions in Island, Huxley does not go into detail. As a result, many practical questions might be raised as to how present-day society might be transformed into some variation on the Palanese theme.

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problems is clearly implied in Island. See Brander, Aldous Huxley, A Critical Study (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1969), p. 110.

[40]For a further fictional elaboration on Huxley's ideas of self-sufficiency see After Many a Summer, op. cit., pp. 130-134, 144-145.

[41]AH, Island, op. cit., p. 148.

[42]AH, "The Double Crisis," in Themes and Variations, op. cit., p. 240.

For better or worse, however, this is not his concern. Huxley merely seeks to show that, given relatively favorable conditions, reforms of the kind he describes are each practicable. Pala itself, of course, is so contrived that its small population has been mercifully isolated from the negative effects of outside influence for almost two hundred years. Thus, its people have avoided arament races, universal debt, over-population, planned obsolescence, racial unrest, colonial exploitation, etc.--a clearly utopian proposition! The attempt by an already heavily industrialized and ideologically committed society to affect these sort of reforms would be a vastly more complicated undertaking and, perhaps, could not be peacefully done in today's "mass" societies. Huxley, to his credit, seems to recognize this for he has Dr. MacPahil frankly admit to Will that, in regard to both Eastern and Western societies, "if war, waste, and money-lenders were abolished, you'd collapse."[43]

On the political level, there is nothing impossible about Pala's political organization as such. The country is organized on the basis of decentralized, semi-autonomous groups arranged along geographical, professional and other lines. The society's social institutions on the other hand, are radically innovative. They are arranged in such a way as to avoid the rise of a power-hungry "great leader." Built into the educational and occupational guidance programs is

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[43]AH, Island, op. cit., p. 146.

a refined knowledge of Sheldonian body-type and personality classifications supplemented by a practical awareness of the fact that childhood experiences, family, and peer-group pressures can condition a person's perceptions. For instance, Dr. MacPahil tells Will that the Palanese have concluded that dangerous delinquents fall roughly into two distinct groups, the "muscle people" and the "Peter Pans."[44]

"Peter Pans" are described as those who physiologically grow too slowly--a condition that usually produces frustration and envy of those physically more well-adjusted. This envy often turns to hatred as the person finds that he cannot successfully compete. The Palanese have developed bio-chemical and psychological tests to detect such late physical maturers at an early age. Compensating treatment (not detailed in the novel) is administered, and, Huxley asserts, not only is the individual happier, but the society is saved a multitude of potentially dangerous malcontents and failures.

"Muscle people" act in terms of Sheldon's classical mesomorph-somatotonic. They are extroverts who feel compelled to <u>do something</u> while not overly concerned with the problem of means. One cannot treat them physicologically as is possible with the "Peter Pans". How then is one to deal with them? Dr. MacPhail explains,

> First of all, our social arrangements offer them very few opportunities for bullying their families, and

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[44] <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 150-151.

> our political arrangements make it practically impossible for them to domineer on any larger scale. Second, we train Muscle Men to be aware and sensitive . . . We canalize this love of power and we deflect it - turn it away from people and on to things. We give them all kinds of difficult tasks to perform - strenuous and violent tasks that exercise their muscles and satisfy their craving for domination - but satisfy it at nobody's expense and in ways that are either harmless or positively useful.45

"Prevention being always preferable to cure" is an old theme in Huxley's work.[46] Just as it is best to be able to prevent illness rather than to rely on the ability to cure, so it is better to prevent the rise of the tyrant, criminal, and bully rather than to depend on obviously inadequate penal systems. The ability to detect early the frustrations and maladjustments that lead people along these paths is, for Huxley a large part of the answer. As we said above none of this is in itself impossible, but of course, it makes the novel no less utopian. The type of psychological testing required and the treatment prescribed, especially in the case of "Peter Pans" would present significant civil rights problems in most Western nations. There is also the fact that Huxley aims at altering the concept that success

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[45] Ibid., p. 154.

[46] In 1934 in the essay "Do We Require Orgies?" Huxley wrote, "Many activities are psychologically satisfying but socially harmful. Suppression of these should always be accompanied by the offer of an alternative activity, as rewarding to the individual engaged in it, but socially harmless or, if possible, beneficial." Yale Review, op. cit., pp. 473-473.

is somehow a function of being the aggressive "go getter." As neurotic as is the West's image of the ideal man there is no significant falling away of its influence as a guiding model and, no doubt, conditioning that sought to undercut this ideal would meet with great resistance. Nevertheless, Huxley is convinced that such conditioning is both effective and ultimately compatible with small, democratic, social entities (a questionable act of faith at least given the modern Western notion of democracy) and Pala is suppose to demonstrate this.

On Pala there are a small number of police and judges for the abuse of power must still be regulated on a legal level. In most cases, however, criminality is a problem which is handled by the Mutual Adoption Club. "Group therapy" Will is told, "within a community that has assumed group responsibility for the delinquent! And in difficult cases the group therapy is supplemented by medical treatment and a course on moksha-medicine [psychedelic] experiences, directed by somebody with an exceptional degree of insight."[47]

This raises two questions: who is to define what is "criminal," and what limits are acceptable in the achievement of a "well-adjusted" people? There is, of course, a difference between the techniques and general application of conditioning in Brave New World and Island. All such techniques

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[47]AH, Island, op. cit., pp. 155-156.

can be misused, however, and the line that divides the two societies is forever a fine one. In the end all seems to rest on the good will of those who apply these means, as well as an alert and responsible level of awareness among the general citizenry. As we have noted, today, certainly, there can be no guarantee on either of these counts--a fact that Huxley himself no doubt recognized. There is here a problem that may forever defy solution: how to define and implement the "good" society without directly or indirectly hampering individuality.

Having been given this background concerning the preventative nature of Pala's politico-economic base, Will is now introduced to "moksha-medicine." It is a substance akin to psilocybin, and thus represents that "harmless" psychedelic that Huxley had long been prophesying. "Moksha" means "liberation" in Sanskrit, and that is just what this agent is designed to help facilitate for the Palanese. Huxley wrote:

> In my utopian fantasy, Island, I speculated in fictional terms about the ways in which a substance akin to psilocybin could be used to potentiate the non-verbal education of adolescents and to remind adults that the real world is very different from the misshapen universe they have created for themselves by means of their culture-conditioned prejudices.48

As an introduction to "moksha-medicine," Will is taken to a mountaintop Buddhist temple to witness the first sampling of

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[48]AH, "Culture and the Individual," in Solomon, op. cit., p. 47.

the drug by a group of Palanese adolescents.[49] For Will, it proves to be a lesson in the socio-religious application of psychedelics. The initiates ingest the drug within a religious setting; they are then spoken to, first about experiencing life to the full, life as "at once beauty and horror," danger and security, etc. With the help of the drug they begin to see and feel how these contradictions become fused after full awareness is approached. Secondly, the youths are addressed by Dr. MacPhail, who talks to them of nature, the universe, all Being and Man's place therein. The youths, by now well under the influence of the drug, are instructed by the doctor to look at a four-foot statue of a dancing Shiva. It pulsates with an intense brightness. It dances throughout all time and in the eternal now. The god dances in all worlds at once: in the world of nature, mass and energy, within which there is endless becoming and passing away. It personifies what we call "the nature of things" and, embodied in sentient, conscious beings like ourselves, it becomes capable of joy and suffering. The Buddha said, "I show you sorrow," but also, "I show you the end of sorrow." Thus Shiva also dances in the world of the spirit. With one of his hands turned palm forward, he indicates that we should not be afraid; everything, ultimately, is "All Right." In reassurance, he points at his feet. His right

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[49] AH, Island, op. cit., pp. 162-170.

foot tramples a grotesque dwarf of immense power, symbolic of the human ego--the manifestation of our greedy, superficial selves. The other foot is raised up in defiance of gravity, representing release and liberation through spiritual enlightenment.[50]

The ceremony continues, and the adolescents are told that this experience with the "Moksha-medicine" allows them to glimpse for a timeless moment that which they, and their environment, fully are. However, the psychedelic experience will pass; therefore, the most important point for them now to consider is what they shall do with it when the direct, transient effects have gone. Dr. MacPhail tells them:

> All that Pala can do for you with its social arrangments, is to provide you with the techniques and opportunities. And all that the moksha-medicine can do is to give you a succession of beatific glimpses, an hour or two, every now and then, of enlightening and liberating grace. It remains for you to decide whether you'll co-operate with grace and take those opportunities.51

Huxley tries to demonstrate that the psychedelic drug experience can be intergrated into a socially and religiously enlightening upbringing without degenerating into a self-defeating means of escape from the problems of life.

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[50]The descriptions of psychedelic trips found in Island are, in large part, based on Huxley's own experiences with these drugs. Laura Huxley cites an unpublished letter of her husband's written to Dr. Albert Hoffman, the man who first synthesized LSD, in which he states, "In Island the account of individual [psychedelic] experiences is first-hand knowledge." This Timeless Moment, op. cit., p. 146.

[51]AH, Island, op. cit., p. 169.

Abuse is avoided by controlled use of the drug as just another, albeit very key, technique within a broad educational process, and by limiting its use to once a year or so. Finally, the entire society with its institutional arrangements and value structures, serves as a supportive preparatory and follow-up framework to reinforce the lessons learned and insights attained under the drug.[52] In this way, the "mass" use of the psychedelic takes on positive political significance. It supplies a direct experiential awareness that bolsters the ethical principles which shape the perceptual co-ordinates of the Palanese citizens. It is worth emphasizing that for "mass" use such an integrated program would be absolutely necessary. Without a controlled approach and the supportive structure of social values and institutions conducive to an "amphibious" life-style only those whose personalities happen to lean towards a mystical interpretation of life will use the drug in a way which Huxley approves. The history of the use of psychedelics in the United States during the 1960's bears this out.

As a final insight into Palanese life, Will tours the elementary school at which Susila teaches.[53] Here he is

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[52] In This Timeless Moment, Laura Huxley emphasizes the difference between Aldous's role for psychedelics within the Palanese society and the role they have come to play in the contemporary West. "In Island," she writes, "he develops the social meaning of the psychedelic experience, which, through understanding, love, and compassion can bring about a better world." op. cit., p. 132. See also p. 133, and Bedford, II, op. cit., p. 331.

[53] AH, Island, op. cit., pp. 201-225.

told that the goal is to answer, in the most humane way, the basic question, "what are boys and girls for?" Huxley believes that the "real life" answer given to this question by both East and West is thoroughly dehumanizing. In the West, he claims, generations are raised to be reliable mass-consumers and in the East to be unquestioning supporters of the local ideology. As noted in Chapter III, he is not suggesting that every teacher consciously promotes mass-consumerism in the classroom. He is expressing, however, his opinion that, taken all together, peer group pressure, parental guidance and the school experience inculcates values that uphold the consumerism that has become the alpha and omega of the modern Western life-style. On Pala the situation reflects Huxley's personal rejection of both the consumer idea and the vice of nation-worship. Here boys and girls are for "actualization, for being turned into full-blown human beings."[54] It would seem that "amphibious" man, almost by definition, can have use for technology only in so far as it can free men from poverty and alienating labor so he may better cultivate the mind and spirit. Enslavement to any number of created needs obviously can have no place in this scheme. Likewise, political organization is of value to Huxley only in so far as it promotes the goals of "amphibious" man.

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[54] Ibid., p. 202.

Palanese schools are thus designed to "actualize" one's "amphibious" nature. At the elementary level primary emphasis is not yet given to awareness on the spiritual level. The coming to awareness of "individuals in their transcedent unity" is left to the more advanced stages of education, which include the use of psychedelics. At the pre-adolescent stage the basis for this eventual discovery is laid by developing self-awareness on a psycho-physical level. The necessity for the establishment of foundations for spiritual enlightenment is expressed by Huxley in this way:

> The beatitude which follows self-abandonment and even the act of self-abandonment itself, must be related to, and conditioned by, certain dispositions of the organs' and in most super-natural states there is bound to be a physical element - which means that there must be appropriate psycho-physical methods for creating the conditions most favourable to such states.55

It is in the elementary schools that this process is systematically begun. First, the differences between children are assessed in order to determine each child's size, shape, temperament, gifts, and deficiencies. What one seeks to know is "who or what, anatomically, biochemically, and psychologically, is this child?"[56] On the basis of this information each child is taught to come to an understanding of his own psycho-physical self. He is instructed in how to understand and be

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[55]AH, "Variations on a Philosopher," in Themes and Variations, op. cit., p. 137.

[56]AH, Island, op. cit., p. 203.

tolerant of types different from himself. On a social level, he is taught to analyse language, and to maintain a state of awareness, in order that his childhood curiosity and sense of freshness does not fade with age. This last point is demonstrated by the manner in which the child is taught to look at the most common of objects. For example, he is taught to see a flower in its many different forms: as a botanical specimen that the scientist might see; as the unique object of nature an artist might behold; as the miraculous example of eternal suchness which the Buddha saw. This type of bridge building trains the child's perceptions in such a way as to minimize any negative effects of later professional specialization.

There is another interesting effort that the Palanese make at this stage and which reflects Huxley's long-standing concern with the effects of propaganda. They try to identify those among their children who will make up the roughly twenty percent of any given generation especially open to suggestibility--those who are easily hypnotized, even to the point of somanbulism. Politically speaking, they are those individuals who could potentially comprise the unquestioning party faithful, the easily manipulated true-believer, the "propagandist's predestined victims." Once identified, this still young twenty percent is then hypnotised and trained to be able to better resist any preachings that have anti-human

overtones. Hypnotism is, in short, used to reduce these people's susceptibility to certain forms of propagandistic persuasion. Positively speaking, they are then taught that their ability to easily achieve a deep hypnotic trance can be used as a beneficial talent--it allows one to be able to distort time, a technqiue that can make various short-cuts in the learning process possible.[57]

Huxley's educational ideas as presented in Island, essentially try to "cover all bets." If one is of an introverted temperament one learns how best to cope and come out of one's shell. The extroverted personality learns to control and channel his energies and get along with others. Different types of people approach life and religion in different ways, and everyone on Pala learns the one best suited to him or her. For those who love ritual, there is ritual--but ritual that is relevant in that it puts the individual in touch with reality and leads him along what the Bhagavad-Gita calls the "Way of Devotion." For the studious, intellectual, quiet person there is the "Way of Self-Knowledge." And, for the more aggressive, out-going type there is the "Way of Disinterested Action." Finally, no matter what his type or what interests or approach to life he pursues, the individual is taught the techniques of self-control.

Most of the techniques Huxley expounds are not new to his writing. We find descriptions of techniques for the

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[57] Ibid., pp. 204-205.

control of pain and the channeling of energy in "Education on the Nonverbal Level,"[58] a discussion of the proper use of the body in "Education of an Amphibian,"[59] an exposition on decentralism in both Ends and Means and After Many a Summer,[60] and an argument for the correct development of temperament and constitution to facilitate enlightenment in The Perennial Philosophy.[61] For years Huxley has been describing simple but effective psycho-physical ways that help people to be more aware and generally more human. In Island he combines many of them to create an educational process which, from the earliest moment, presents the child with a picture of his inner and outer world that is at once an immediate, organic, interrelated whole. The question is, of course, would all this actually work to produce the type of people he portrays in Island? Individually, the techniques he describes no doubt work with a willing subject but it is an educated guess on Huxley's part that, collectively and used systematically, they would do what he describes on a "mass" scale. This is simply because it has never been tried--a fact that does not

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[58] AH, "Education on the Nonverbal Level," in Daedalus, op. cit., pp. 292-293.

[59] AH, "Education of an Amphibian," in Adonis and the Alphabet, op. cit., pp. 120-129.

[60] AH, Ends and Means, op. cit., pp. 70-88 and After Many a Summer, op. cit., pp. 130-134.

[61] AH, The Perennial Philosophy, op. cit., pp. 146-161.

in any way invalidate his efforts to promote them as sane alternatives to the present ends and means of the West's acculturation process.

In the end, Huxley leaves the reader convinced that, at the very least, Western education can do much more than at present to enrich children's lives. Again, he does not deal with a method to induce the implementation of reforms--only to demonstrate that humanizing techniques exist and work.[62]

Within the context of the story, Will too is persuaded that Pala is a great example of what collective humanity can accomplish. He is convinced to the point that he begins to have serious doubts concerning his complicity in the betrayal of this civilization. Also, with growing affection and confidentiality, he bares his soul to Susila and she, using much the same approach as her daughter did in the first chapter, ultimately helps him come to terms with his guilt over the death of his old love. In the last chapter, after he withdraws from his association with Murugan and the Rani,

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[62] In the year that Island was published (1962), Huxley wrote, "Island is a kind of pragmatic dream--a fantasy with detailed and (conceivably) practical instructions for making the imagined and desirable harmonization of European and Indian insights become a fact. But alas, in spite of these pragmatic aspects, the book still remains a dream--far removed (as I sadly made clear in the final paragraphs of the story) from our present reality. And yet, if we weren't all so busy trying to do something else, we could, I belive, make this world a place fit for fully human beings to live in." Letters, AH to H. M. Maharaja Dr. Karan Singh, Dec. 22, 1962, op. cit., p. 944.

Will himself takes the moksha-medicine under Susila's guidance.[63] Will's psychedelic experience is the symbol of Western man's death and resurrection and a disguised autobiographical tribute to the role of psychedelics in Huxley's own struggle for salvation. Under its influence, Will takes a step forward toward full self-knowledge. He recognizes that his own spiritual essence is overlayed by a "muddy filter" which, in its radical cynicism, refuses to take "yes" for an answer to life despite his deep longing to do so (here it is hard not to conclude that Huxley is describing his younger self). With his eyes closed, Will partakes of a euphoric bliss. He is, however, instructed by Susila that he must not abandon the earth for heaven. He must open his eyes wide. In complying, he learns that neither heaven nor earth alone are sufficient to attain salvation.[64] Both, as the Mahayana Buddhists tell us, are ultimately manifestations of the same thing. Finally, Will learns to see the "Clear Light of the Void" even in the people whom he feels are, collectively, such ruthless animals. For the Light is compassion too. Out of the same patterns of existence come beauty and ugliness, cruelty and kindness. As Will, towards the end of his psychedelic experience, phrases it:

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[63] AH, Island, op. cit., pp. 263-286.

[64] Just as Huxley himself had done. See Laura Huxley, This Timeless Moment, op. cit., pp. 169-171.

> Sun into Chartres and then stained glass windows into bargain basement. And the bargain basement is also the torture chamber, the concentration camp, the charnel house with Christmas tree decorations. And now the bargain basement goes into reverse, picks up Chartes and a slice of the sun, and backs out into this - into you and me by Rembrandt.65

The moksha-medicine experience is the final step in Will's conversion to the Palanese philosophy of life. He will shortly need all the insight which he has acquired for, as his psychedelic experience ends, Huxley has Col. Dipa's troops arrive, intent upon taking control of the island. In this tragic ending Huxley comes to terms with reality and acknowledges the fact that, collectively, men seem to have no intention of altering their present course. Despite this, or because of it, the novel's last sentence is much like its first. The mynah bird calls for "attention"--attention by the individual to the tragedy of human cruelty and ignorance on the one hand; on the other, attention to the universal underlying source of englightenment which Pala has suggested is realizable--if not, presently, on a society-wide basis, then certainly by any and every person willing to heed Huxley's message.

III

Island has been viewed by many as overly didactic[66] and indeed there were times when even Huxley thought it so.[67]

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[65] AH, Island, op. cit., p. 279.

[66] For example, see Laurence Brander, Aldous Huxley, A Critical Study (London: Hart-Davis, 1969), pp. 104-105.

[67] Letters, AH to M. Land, March 1, 1962, op. cit., p. 930.

If, however, one accepts the advice of the mynah birds, that is, pays attention (in this case) to the meaning of the words, one is no longer bothered by the imbalance of lesson to story.

The novel's realistic ending protects Huxley from the charge of naivete, and it is sufficient to observe that the particulars of Island are theoretically possible and practicable. The point is to persuade men to realize the possibilities in utilizing the many means at his disposal to "amphibiously" humanize himself.[68] Huxley feels that roughly twenty percent of human suffering is unavoidable: that is, due to the human condition. The other eighty percent, however, has its roots in human ignorance and greed, and it is this portion that any society with a will and enough self-knowlege can minimize, if not eliminate. This is Island's moral.

Humphry Osmond once remarked to the author of this paper that the Palanese life-style is comparable to Leonardo's flying machine--aerodynamically sound, but conceived in an age when the production of an adequate engine was impossible. Today we know how to make many of the parts of the engine necessary to realize the "amphibious" life-style Huxley

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[68]The possibilities, as set forth in Island, take the form of meldings--a melding of East and West as against either, especially the West,going its own overly materialistic or overly spiritualistic way, and, correspondingly, a melding of of the many selves of the individual as against living on one or two levels only. Pala exemplifies the ideas discussed throughout this paper put into practice.

envisioned. The techniques which he enumerated exist, and furthermore, our sociological, physiological, political and economic knowledge is every-growing.[69] It *is* now possible to effectively attack man's probelms on "all fronts"--to develop his awareness simultaneously on all levels.

Yet there is still an open-ended question: is even the steadily growing pool of human knowledge and skill sufficient to the task? As Huxley warns us, a struggle exists between self-transcending human awareness and criminal presumption allied with ignorance. Place *Brave New World* next to *Island* and one is reminded that knowledge can be used in more than one way. Ultimately, it is not only a question of know-how, but also of will. *Island* says it *can* be done (and Huxley certainly feels it ought to be done), not that it *will* be done.

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[69] Dr. Osmond's book *Understanding Understanding* (*op. cit.*, *passim*) is a noteworthy contribution to this humanizing effort.

CONCLUSION

Taken as a whole, Aldous Huxley's outlook falls into no set intellectual category or mold of thought. Though he has certain ideas in common with Alan Watts, Henri Bergson, William James, Bertrand Russell and others, he belongs to no "school." In his later life he comes closest to identifying with the "Perennial Philosophers," or those who hold man's most important task to be the fulfilling of his spiritual self. Even here, however, Huxley departs from tradition in his willingness to accept scientific methods and knowledge as useful in the quest for self-transcendence.

We may distinguish three attributes of Huxley's thought which characterize his approach to human problems and set him off from many of his contemporaries. First, Huxley is, in a sense, attempting to "control" reason. As has been seen, he felt that in the West reason has, so to speak, become the prisoner of a distorted way of perceiving. It thus has been used to produce an environment constricting to human potential. Here Huxley, taking his cue from Bergson, asserts a very unorthodox concept--the idea that the brain is an organ that does not necessarily facilitate, but rather often functions to narrow the individual's ability to experience the world. The more narrow a person's

experience of his environment, the more susceptible the individual to predjudices and misconceptions of all sorts. Culture and tradition as well as the particular needs of survival on this planet tend to direct the brain into more concentrated, specialized ways of perceiving. Huxley's object becomes to control the tendency for this situation to result in negative social conditioning by, among other things, a balancing emphasis on non-analytical, intuitive paths to knowledge--paths which can put one in "direct" contact with nature, our "physiological-self" and the spirit. This is not an anti-intellectual position on Huxley's part unless one sees the assertion that analytical reason is not the only road to knowledge as an attack on the intellect. Huxley does not mean it as such and certainly does not deny the importance of a clear and precise use of reason within its proper realm. By denying analytical reason as <u>the only really useful path to knowledge</u>, however, he has set himself apart from the <u>main currents</u> of modern Western intellectual thought.[1]

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[1]That the West's intellectual tradition is characterized by a faith in the mind's analytical capacities as the best tool for the gathering of "useful" knowledge is not detracted from by such developments as Freud's theories. Freud's position is that reason has its bounds and must be understood within the limiting context of the subconscious needs and drives of the human animal. Reason cannot do away with these. Yet when it comes to understanding the world around us and man's place in it, Freud is too much of a European to recognize any other path to knowledge but analytical reason. Mystical practices and such techniques as yoga and meditation

Secondly, in the attempt to balance and thus "control" reason Huxley has recourse to Eastern philosophy, psychology and metaphysics. By doing so, he would seem to further remove himself from the Western intellectual context. In truth, however, this preference for the approach to certain forms of knowledge prescribed by "Eastern psychology with its metaphysical basis" (that is, for the approach taken by the various yogic and tantric techniques to achieve self-awareness) is prompted by Huxley's scientific family tradition. It is the theory and practice aspect of Oriental religious philosophy which attracts Huxley. (While these practices are non-analytical the linking of specific procedures to specific ends has a scientific quality to it). Mystical reality becomes an hypothesis which, through various forms of experimentation, thousands upon thousands of people, in different cultural settings and times, have seemed to verify. Like a scientist Huxley seeks to personally prove the hypothesis through systematic and controlled experiments (particulary with psychedelic drugs). With the possible

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are not considered by him as "educational tools" of any great worth. Huxley, on the other hand, does believe them to be such and considers the "knowledge" they can supply as necessary to human progress as that of the intellect.

Further, the assertion of reason's central position in the West's intellectual tradition is not to deny the importance of various Romantic schools of thought and periodic "transcendental" movements such as that in 19th century United States. These, however, are reactions to the supposed shortcomings of the major theme--the predominant position held by analytical reason.

exception of the theologist-philosopher Alan Watts, Huxley is unique among twnetieth century "moral-philosophers" in taking this theory and practice approach. While he did not achieve a full mystical experience he was able, to his own satisfaction, to verify that various techniques, both Eastern and Western in origin, aided in developing one's capacity to achieve direct intuitive insight and awareness into one's internal and external environment--a necessary prerequisite, he believed, for the development of "amphibious" man and spiritual enlightenment. Furthermore, it indicated to him that what he believed to be mankind's "urge to self-transcendence" could ultimately be controlled and directed. Again, Huxley does not want to turn his back on Western tradition so much as meld it with aspects of Eastern knowledge. Along with men like Bergson, Watts and Christopher Isherwood, he saw salvation for Western man in the coming together and actualization of century-old insights into the human condition acquired by both East and West.

Thirdly, it is ultimately from the West that Huxley draws what he considers the most important technique available for the achievement of enlightenment--the controlled judicious use of psychedelic drugs. Indeed, toward the last decade of his life, the use of psychedelic drugs takes precedence over all other awareness-developing methods. Thus, more and more, the ends which he prescribes for "amphibious" man become religious while the means become, for the now aged

Huxley, predominantly a function of scientific knowledge.

This attempt to merge what in the West has often been looked upon as incompatible elements: Eastern and Western paths to knowledge, scientific method and religious insight, etc., and, further, Huxley's willingness to take an experimental orientation to man's humanization, involving as it did such controversial means as yoga and meditation, the Bates and Alexander method and finally psychedelics, almost totally separates him from his intellectual contemporaries. Thus, in the final analysis, this amalgamated approach, this "transcendental pragmatism" and the "amphibious" image of human potential which results appears to Western eyes as alien. Under the circumstances, it is perhaps best to regard Aldous Huxley as a "pragmatic dreamer." He is a "dreamer" because he looks towards a set of ideals not now acceptable to the major world cultures. Yet he is "pragmatic" because, with utter seriousness, he seeks to promote potentially acceptable means that can eventually transform the ideals into reality (or as close to being able to be actualized as possible).[2]

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[2]Huxley was always concerned that his ideas would reach an audience with the power and influence to possibly put them into effect. For instance, in 1953 he tried, unsuccessfully, to convince the Ford Foundation to finance research into the role of language in international relations, the possibility of education on a non-verbal level, and the use of mescalin. See Bedford, II, op. cit., p. 148 and 235.

As a reformer, Huxley's career was not successful. His ideal of the "amphibious" man--whether now technically possible of achievement or not--remains unknown to most. In the process of formulating and promoting his ideas, however, Huxley has produced a vast body of erudite literature. This corpus may well earn him a place among the best essayists of the twentieth century. If he is not to be remembered as a successful advocate of the realization of full human potential, or even as the articulate spokesman who legitimized the psychedelic drug experience, he might be remembered as one who, in pursuing these "reforms," demonstrated the precision and integrity with which the responsible writer must handle language. He considered himself first and foremost a writer and described his own high standard as such when he wrote:

> Human life is lived simultaneously on many levels and has many meanings. Literature is a device for reporting the multifarious facts and expressing their various significances. When the literary artist undertakes to give a purer sense to the words of his tribe, he does so with the express purpose of creating a language capable of conveying, not the single meaning of some particular science, but the multiple significance of human experience, on its most private as well as on its more public levels. He purifies, not by simplifying and jargonizing, but by deepening and extending, by enriching with allusive harmonics, with overtones of association and undertones of sonorous magic.3

In this way, he hoped, the writer's words could become potential catalysts for greater awareness and clear-sightedness.

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[3]AH, Literature and Science, op. cit., p. 14.

This demand for a "purification" of language is, in effect a challenge to writers of all kinds--"how will they use their talent?" Huxley asks, in what he sees as the continuing struggle between criminality allied with ignorance and enlightened processes of humanization. "Will [the writer] range himself with reason in the service of Decency? Or with rationalization in the service of the Immanent Baboon? Is he using his gifts to work for more life, more love, more freedom?"[4] Once again, the challenge tends to become a quest for an ideal, a "pragmatic dream," and yet, as always, Huxley stands as his own best example of what is humanly possible.

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[4] Ibid., p. 58.

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